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EUROPEAN WAR

WITH THE ANZACS IN CAIRO

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE WOWSER

A TALE OF THE NEW ZEALAND BUSH

BY

GUY THORNTON, C.F.

CHAPLAIN-CAPTAIN TO N.Z.E.F.

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WITH THE ANZACS IN CAIRO

THE TALE OF A GREAT FIGHT

BY
GUY THORNTON, C.F.

CHAPLAIN-CAPTAIN TO THE
NEW ZEALAND EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
(MAIN BODY)

AUTHOR OF
"THE WOWER: A TALE OF THE NEW ZEALAND BUSH"

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FOREWORD

PERSISTENT rumours, more or less exaggerated, have been circulated in almost every part of our Empire with regard to the behaviour of our brave Australian, New Zealand and British troops whilst they were stationed in and near Cairo.

I purpose in these pages to give a plain, unvarnished account of the real condition of affairs in that city. To deny the existence of unspeakable vice and grossly open immorality in Cairo is unhappily impossible, but I do deny, and deny most emphatically, that the majority of our splendid soldiers were guilty of the various excesses which have been attributed to them. It is true that a small percentage of "rotters" and "wasters" behaved as badly as it was possible for men to behave, *but when the fact of the abnormal temptations of a large Eastern city is taken into consideration it will be realised that the wonder is not that so many fell but that so many stood.*

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I speak only of what I have seen and heard. I have preferred rather to err on the side of understating these rampant evils than to risk overstating them.

We are, as a nation, responsible to God for Egypt. As long as our Empire exists, so long will a large garrison of British troops be stationed in that country. For their sakes alone drastic steps should be undertaken to abolish the present system of licensed and unlicensed vice.

I realise how handicapped our rulers in that land have been in the past by the "Capitulations." We are at war now, and martial law holds sway there as well as elsewhere.: by one stroke of the pen the authorities, backed by public opinion, could make an end of the existent flaunting, bare-faced, immorality. For the reputation of our nation, for the welfare of our soldiers, present and future, I pray that that day may come soon.

I also tell of the gracious revival that visited thousands of our soldiers, in order that the hearts of many parents, whose boys lie buried on the steep slopes of Gallipoli, may be comforted. Hundreds upon hundreds

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of men who left their native shores without having evinced the slightest regard for God and Christ were led in Egypt to a saving knowledge of Him whom to know means salvation from the penalty and power of sin.

If this book brings consolation to any stricken heart, vindicates the fair fame of our gallant men, and inspires any degree of desire that wrongs may be righted, I am well content to have my motives impugned and to incur any hostile criticism.

In conclusion, I might say that, except where otherwise stated, these lines were written whilst I was in an Egyptian hospital, and in London recovering from a severe illness, and perhaps lack literary style or finish. I offer no apologies for my message, although I regret that my busy life leaves me no time to present that message in a more attractive form.

G. T.

WITH THE ANZACS IN CAIRO

CHAPTER I

OUR ARRIVAL AT ZEITOUN

ON Sunday, December 4th, 1914, the advance parties of the Australian and New Zealand forces disembarked and immediately entrained at Alexandria, and commenced their journey through the closely cultivated and thickly populated Nile Delta to Cairo. On each side of the railway line lay palm groves, fields of maize, cotton, millet, and berseim (a species of clover).

We noted with interest the primitive method of cultivating the land with wooden ploughs drawn by buffaloes, horses, mules and sometimes camels. The vivid green of the fields, the feathery date palms, the picturesque (though appallingly filthy) native villages, the silver threads which revealed a network of canals, combined in

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presenting to our view a strange and beautiful scene.

As we neared Cairo we saw, for what was to the vast majority of us the first time, the surpassing splendour of an Egyptian sunset. No artist, however great his genius, could do it justice. The golds, the crimsons, the blues, the greys are inimitable. Time and again on the Australian desert have I gazed enraptured on the lights of the setting sun ; in the South Sea Islands I have marvelled at the infinite glory of the sky as the sun disappeared beneath the waves, noted the strange elusive lights that illuminated the coral beach, the waving cocoanut palms and the tropical forest, and longed to be able to describe the indescribable. But never have I been so conscious of the bankruptcy of thought and language adequately to convey the scene to anyone who has not lived in the East as on that evening when I saw, for the first time, an Egyptian sunset. Man's greatest emotions cannot be expressed ; as a Cornish miner said when seeking to describe the " Peace of God which passeth all understanding," " It's better felt than telt." And, oh, the surprise of the after-

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glow, the whole sky flooded with soft, mellow, golden beams which transfigured into celestial beauty, immersed in loveliness, and in an effulgence of glory the previously stern and forbidding clouds.

Everything was bathed in glory; the palms, the stately minarets, even the miserable native huts possessed a beauty, transient it is true, but beyond the power of man to describe.

The Citadel at Cairo, surmounted by the Alabaster Palace and crowned with three great minarets, at last came into view. We detrained during the brief twilight, and marched to what was known as the Zeitoun Camp. Correctly speaking the camp was really the Helmieh camp, since it practically adjoined the railway station of that name. In Helmieh there are a few European houses, and a fairly large native village. Near to the camp stands the famous obelisk of Matarieh, the oldest in Egypt. When Abraham visited Egypt he must have passed almost beneath its shade, Joseph passed between it and its fellow obelisk (since taken away) on his marriage day, when he wedded Asenath, the daughter of the priest of On.

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Here Moses became "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." Here Plato studied, here Herodotus wrote, and here for hundreds of years stood the great temple, which was also a university, the centre of learning for the whole of the then known world.

No great distance away lay the model suburb of Heliopolis, a place rich in magnificent buildings, and possessing one of the finest hotels in the world. Behind us lay the cemetery of the old city of On, where it was impossible to walk a step without treading on the bones of those who had been buried there five to six thousand years ago. Away to the East stretched the desert of yellow sand and stones, with here and there a stunted shrub.

No warm welcome awaited us. Our coming was unexpected, and consequently adequate preparations for our arrival were conspicuous by their absence. Our camping ground was the desert. Many of us for the first time had the doubtful pleasure of sleeping in the open air on the sand. Our tents had "missed the bus." The night was extremely cold, and felt colder than it really was owing to the great change of temperature between 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. (I have often

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noticed the temperature vary from 30 to 45 degrees Fah. in a few hours.) We were hungry and cold. Historical associations may be interesting, but they certainly do not tend to satisfy the cravings of the inner man. At last, to our great joy, one of our number discovered that it was possible to obtain a cup of cocoa and a very small French roll from a Greek canteen-keeper. The canteen was a small tent near a brick wall, and was immediately surrounded by scores of famished men. Our horses had to be taken away to the nearest place where it was possible to find a fence to which to tether them. By the time this was done we were ready for bed, but we had no beds and no blankets, nothing but our great-coats, as our kits had been mislaid.

The sand was up to our ankles, and we fondly and, as it turned out, foolishly imagined, would consequently make an easy bed. We were bitterly disappointed. We scraped out a hollow for our hips and carefully removed all the stones, but the sand, soft and yielding when we first lay upon it, became each minute harder and harder. I know that my body seemed to possess a

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peculiarly magnetic attraction for sharp stones, which persistently worked their way through the sand, and sought to pierce my skin wherever possible. There are happily few unpleasant situations which have no corresponding alleviations; it is marvellous what sombre satisfaction I derived from the sufferings of my fellows. Of course, as a Padre, I regretted the very strong and sulphurous language in which they apparently considered their complaints should be couched. We walked about, swinging our arms and stamping our feet, and trying in vain to go to sleep, until morning dawned upon many very bad-tempered and hungry men. Some officers were fortunate enough to be invited to breakfast by the British officers of the Lancashire Territorials, who were camped near us. The rest had to be satisfied with another cup of cocoa and a French roll.

All day long the transport trains came rolling in, and our joy was great when our missing kits put in an appearance.

Hearing that there was a Y.M.C.A. tent in the Lancashire lines near by, and realising that if there was one thing more than another which would conduce to our men's well-being

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it would be a similar institution in our own camp, I took the car from Heliopolis to Cairo, and endeavoured vainly to find the local secretary and seek to induce him to supply our needs. When I returned, the tents had not only arrived but were pitched. I shared one with several other officers. I hoped to have a good night's sleep, but was disappointed. There is snoring and snoring. One of my tent-mates carried out the art to perfection ; he weighed only fourteen stone, but he had at least a thirty-four stone snore ; not only was it remarkably loud, but he rang the changes on at least five notes, and they were irregularly delivered. In despair I went back to my nook in the sand and slept like the proverbial top.

To my delight the organising secretary of the Y.M.C.A., Mr W. Jessop, arrived the next day, and interviewed Brigadier-Colonel (now Brigadier-General Sir A. H.) Russell, with the result that in a very few days a large Egyptian tent, capable of seating three hundred men, was placed at our brigade's disposal. Chairs, forms, tables, writing-paper and envelopes were provided free of charge by that splendid Association.

WITH THE ANZACS IN CAIRO

Realising that I could not hope to do better service to the men than by helping in this work, I offered to do all that lay in my power to make it a success. The Rev. D. Galloway, of the American Mission in Cairo, at considerable inconvenience to himself, also worked hard and faithfully and successfully. Two of the New Zealand chaplains, Major Grant and Captain Blamires, also lent their willing assistance.

Our men thoroughly appreciated the conveniences which were so freely placed at their disposal in the tent, and it was crowded from the very first. Realising the terrible temptations of Cairo (which I describe in another place) we, who were interested in the men, acting upon the suggestion of the indefatigable Secretary, Mr Jessop, decided that it was vitally necessary immediately to organise strong counter-attractions. A Committee was formed to provide for the well-being of the men, and as a result of their labours a weekly concert was instituted. At first the ladies and gentlemen of Cairo were the chief performers, but, when the British New Zealanders arrived, we discovered to our delight that we had enough

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local talent to provide a good, clean, enjoyable programme weekly.

On another night experts on Egypt, its history and archæology, gave most interesting talks on their particular themes. Dr Zwemer, one of the foremost authorities on Islam, delivered several magnificent lectures, the Rev. Mr M'Neile of the C.M.S. at Old Cairo, Dr. Jays of the Nigerian Mission, Dr Hume, head of the Egyptian Geological Department, and many others, whose names I am sorry to say I do not remember, contributed to make the weekly lectures an unqualified success. The other evenings were left free, so as to afford the soldiers an opportunity of writing home, with the exception of Sunday night, when a service, generally conducted by the chaplains, was held from 7.30 to 8.30. The attendances at these "free" (in contradistinction to the compulsory military parade) services steadily increased; indeed, it was not long before the whole of the seating accommodation of the tent was taken up. Each week-night a very brief service, consisting of the reading of a few verses and an extemporary prayer, was held.

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A post box was kept in the tent, and sometimes no fewer than a thousand letters were posted in a day. Stamps and post-cards were also sold, so that there could be no excuse for any man to go into the city under the pretext of its being necessary. I have sold ten pounds worth of stamps on a mail day. During those early months I was on duty from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., and am certain that some of the happiest days I have ever spent were those in the Mounted Men's Y.M.C.A. tent at Zeitoun.

The men's behaviour was simply splendid, and to work with and for them was a privilege.

My duties were multifarious ; I cannot remember how many wills I have made ; I only hope none of them will be contested. The men used to come to me for advice about business difficulties, yes, and love troubles as well. One night a boy (he could not have been more than twenty years of age) hung about round my table, evidently waiting for an opportunity of speaking to me privately. His usually round face was portentously elongated, and his eyes were wet, as he handed me a letter from his girl to read. There is an old proverb that "Absence makes the

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heart grow fonder." I suppose it does; certainly in this case it had, but alas, she had grown fonder of someone else! In the letter the lady said that she did love him, but went on to describe the fact she loved someone else—"Bob"—"betterer," and that she and Bob were "Going out walking." As I folded up the letter and handed it back to him, I said: "I am afraid you will have to let her go." In accents of woe and despair, and laying intense emphasis upon the last word, he replied:

"But she's *gone*."

Unfortunately for himself, Bob came to Cairo with a later reinforcement, and the evening after his arrival he turned up with an eye in the deepest of mourning; by a remarkably curious coincidence my young friend's face also bore traces of battle. I made no remark, but drew my own conclusions.

One of the greatest privileges that the Y.M.C.A. has conferred upon Christians is that it affords men of all creeds the opportunity of working together with the single object of uplifting their fellows. I certainly never worried about what denomina-

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tion the men professed, and am positive that they, with one exception, never cared about mine. I was therefore somewhat surprised when, after selling four post-cards for the enormous sum of one piastre (two pence halfpenny), I was asked this question—"What parish in New Zealand are you priest of?"

"I am not a priest more than any other Christian," I replied.

"You are ordained, aren't you?"

"Oh, yes."

"Are you not an Anglican priest?"

"No, I am a Baptist minister."

His face grew rigid, and handing me back the four post-cards, he said, in tones of the greatest contempt:

"Please return my money. I was warned not to have anything to do with Nonconformists and I never will."

I am sorry to say I was so amused that I burst out laughing, but a fine Church of England man who overheard the conversation by no means shared my mirth, and it took me all my time to prevent the latter from fulfilling his threat of "punching the beggar's head, in the hope of putting some sense into it."

CHAPTER II

THE CITY OF CAIRO

CAIRO, or Masr, has been described as being "the diamond stud in the handle of the fan of the Delta." A cursory glance at the map will convince anyone of the aptness of this statement. It is not only the greatest city in Africa, but possesses a much larger Mohammedan population than any other town in the world. It is the literary centre of Islam, and within its confines is to be found the greatest of all theological institutions, the El Azhar, in which about twelve thousand men are trained for the Mohammedan priesthood. Its population must now approximate to three-quarters of a million.

Kipling sang :

"For East is East and West is West,
And never the twain shall meet,"

but here East and West have met. It is doubtful whether any other city of its size

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can boast of such a heterogeneous population. Let the experienced traveller sit for half an hour on the great piazza of the Continental Hotel, and he can easily distinguish the following races passing along the street in front—Ethiopians, Nubians, Soudanese, Syrians, Sikhs, Jews, Persians, Arabs, Armenians, British, Australians, New Zealanders, French, Italians, Americans, and other smaller nationalities too numerous to mention.

The air is full of a babel of tongues, amidst which Arabic and English predominate. The latter language has, owing to the great influx of troops during the past year or so, largely displaced French. Arabic is a most unpleasant-sounding language, being harsh and guttural to a degree, but it commends itself very strongly to any man whose orthography is not his strongest point, for each word is spelt just as the speaker happens to fancy it sounds, as the following examples will show. The town of Asyut can be spelt in nearly a dozen different ways:—Asioot, Oasyoot, Osioot, Siut, O'siout, Siout, etc. etc. Arabic certainly leaves room for individuality ; when doubtful as to the exact

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spelling or pronunciation it is always safe to write it or speak it as seemeth best, and all is right. "Mohammedanism" can be spelt in a variety of ways, and the prophet's name in half a dozen. I only wish that in my school days I had been permitted to take the same liberties with the English language. I am afraid I sometimes did, but I have vivid and painful recollections of the fact that my efforts were not appreciated.

Night and day the cafés are full inside and out with a motley throng of customers. Chairs are placed nearly across the footpaths of the very best streets ; here men sit, smoke, and play backgammon. The streets swarm with pedlars, who accost each passer-by with earnest requests to buy. They are an unspeakable nuisance and should be suppressed, if only to obviate the bad language their persistence evokes. It is impossible to travel a couple of hundred yards near Shepherd's Hotel without being pestered by sellers of flower-stands, highly coloured Soudanese beads, walking-sticks, peanuts, muslins, silks, or photographs, some of which are good, but others vile beyond words. As soon as one leaves you, another takes his

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place, but of all the nuisances in Cairo the chief is the bootblack. He is everywhere. It is almost impossible to have a meal in a café without one of the craft sidling up and asking if he should "Clean boots, sir?" These pests watch the approach of a soldier from the camp at Helieh to the railway station, then rush up and demand that they should clean his boots. If he is brave or obstinate enough to reach Cairo without yielding to their importunity the same thing is repeated as soon as he emerges from the station gates. He shakes his head, but that is not sufficient. He threatens them with his cane, but to no purpose. Carefully keeping at arm's length the bootblack walks round him scrutinising, with evident disapprobation on his dirty face, the soldier's boots. To escape, the latter takes the first car, but when he alights he is surrounded by a small host of the enemy, and as a rule succumbs.

Queen Mary said that, when she died, the word "Calais" would be found engraven on her heart (I always thought her heart unusually hard), but when the Cairene dies, he must heave a sigh of the deepest relief, for he knows

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that when he passes into the great Beyond he will not be greeted with the familiar and exasperating cry, "Clean your boots, sir?"

Bargaining is the one thing the Egyptian loves. A rich native will be quite content to spend an hour or more seeking to beat down the price of his purchases by two piastres. To give a hawker what he first demands would probably be a dangerous method of procedure, since his early demise from heart-shock would almost certainly result. The following is a typical deal. The day is hot, and the only fruits that it is safe to eat are those upon which nature has bestowed a skin. (The guileless Egyptian has the unfortunate habit of cleaning the luscious-looking strawberries by the simple and effective process of placing them in his mouth, and licking them vigorously and thoroughly. After this treatment they look so fresh and clean that, did you not know how they had been *washed*, it would require considerable strength of mind to resist successfully the temptation to purchase them.) Grapes need the most careful cleansing, before being safe to eat. The ideal fruit is the oranges, despite the fact that the hawker

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invariably carries them next his extremely dirty skin, inside the blouse of his *gallabiah*. The familiar cry, "Orang-ees, orang-ees, verree nice, verree sweet, verree clean," sounds in your ears from morning to night. You ask, "How much."

"Four piastres, verree nice, verree sweet, verree clean."

"Too much ; *imshi*" (go away).

He will let you go on about ten yards and then he returns to the attack.

"Three piastres, goot orangees, verree nice," etc.

"*Yallah*," a stronger mode of saying "go away."

"Two piastres, goot orangees," etc.

Waved away, though only for a few yards, he runs up to you saying,

"One piastre, you take him—take him, gib me mune."

"The Israelites spoiled the Egyptians." I don't think any other race but the Jews would have succeeded. Ever since, the Egyptian has been spoiling everyone who has been so unfortunate as to have any business transactions with him.

The *arabia* (cab) driver is, as far as my

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knowledge of men goes, absolutely pre-eminent in his lack of brains. Certainly his cruelty to his horses is past belief. I once got into an *arabia* at the Pont Limoun Railway Station, and directed the driver to take me to Davies Bryan's (one of the chief business establishments in Cairo), asking him at the same time whether he knew where it was. "Oh yes, sir, all right, sir." He drove off, lashing his horse into a canter and then into a hand gallop, but in what I knew was the wrong direction. I stopped him, and pointed out the right way. Off he went again, and soon turned down a street which led in a diametrically opposite direction to the right one, and repeated this operation until I had to direct him at every turn by saying, "*Shemalik*"—to the right, or "*Yemenak*"—to the left.

In Alexandria I took a cab, and after giving the driver the address and receiving his voluble assurances that he knew the way (I didn't) he drove me for over an hour, and ultimately pulled up at the very place from which he had started. He had not the slightest idea where I wanted to go, and had been beamingly content to drive aimlessly

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about the city, covering, I suppose, six or seven miles. I then made him drive me to my destination, but his contentment disappeared and gave place to cursing when I paid him the legal fare. I knew enough Arabic to understand something of what he said, but until he had finished his remarks I did not realise how unutterably base, vile and filthy were my ancestors for at least a dozen generations. He evidently knew a great deal more about them than I did, and from the trend of his discourse was strongly predisposed to hold to the Darwinian theory of the origin of man. For sheer, crass, downright, incurable stupidity it would be, I hope, impossible to surpass the Egyptian cabman.

One early morning I was wakened by the sound of howling and wailing. At first I was inclined to think it was some stray cur that had been receiving a sound thrashing, but since the noise continued I went out and saw a soldier administering a doubtless well-deserved "hiding" to a Berber who had been caught prowling about the camp ; when I thought matters had gone quite far enough, I stepped up and stopped the soldier ;

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in his gratitude the Berber flung himself at my feet, and commenced kissing my shoes, whilst tears were pouring from his eyes. Certainly the lower classes, oppressed as they have been from time immemorial, are not only not manly, but are despicable in many other ways, and unfortunately the soldiers, for the most part, only came into contact with the uneducated of the population, and consequently hardly a man had a good word to say for the native.

Although the vast majority of the inhabitants of Cairo are Mohammedans, nearly all religions are represented. The following statistics will reveal their strength :

Mohammedans	. about	500,000
Copts (Coptic Church)	. .	50,000
Greek Church	. .	20,000
Jews	20,000

I have not been able to obtain late figures as to the numbers of the Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, and other Protestant communions. The Catholics have a lovely Cathedral, and the Basilica, their Church at Heliopolis, is one of the show places of Cairo. Since there are so many Italians and French

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Cairenes, they must be a very strong body. The American Mission, with its 196 educational institutions, where 16,500 pupils are gathered, has contributed as far as I am able to judge more than any other religious organisation to raise the Egyptian nation from the spiritual lethargy in which it has been sunk for ages. Its work has been mainly among the Copts (the lineal descendants of the Pharaohs), and has resulted not only in the upbuilding of many of their own churches, but in quickening to an appreciable extent the spiritual life of the Coptic Church itself.

The Egyptian General Mission, whose labours are mainly directed towards securing converts from Mohammedanism, have already, although comparatively speaking only recently established, accomplished a splendid work. Their headquarters at Zeitoun became the home of many of our boys, and there are hundreds who will look back upon Mr Logan's and Mr Swan's hospitality with deep gratitude. Indeed, words fail adequately to express the magnificent hospitality shown to our men by all the members of these two missions.

CHAPTER III

THE CITY OF CAIRO (*continued*)

To see, and seeing, to understand, a city like Cairo and its inhabitants, is a feat not to be accomplished in a month (the stay of the average tourist), or in twelve months, for after more than a year's residence I have come to the conclusion that my knowledge of it is, for the most part, merely superficial. There is a surprising elusiveness about the East and the Eastern. Apparently all is open and above-board—the people eat, drink, play, sleep and pray in the open air—but the longer one lives in the Orient the more is one conscious that beneath the surface there is something incomprehensible and mysterious. The Eastern alone can understand the Eastern. The bluff Britisher is constitutionally incapable of fathoming the depths of the native of the East, and is conscious that the latter, despite his seeming servility, holds him in contempt.

The splendid electric tram service of Cairo

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makes it an easy matter rapidly and easily to visit each place of interest. From the Citadel, or better still from the Mokattan hills, which command the whole city and its suburbs, an excellent bird's eye view can be obtained. Viewed in the light of the setting sun the spectacle is a magnificent one—the graceful minarets clothed in the soft golden light which beautifies even the dirty native quarters of the city—the desert—the oasis—the distant Pyramids—the Nile as it wends its way through its palm-crowned banks past stately palaces,—all these combine to make a picture which it would be hard to equal for beauty and variety. Cairo is, indeed, a city of striking contrasts. The European quarter, with its magnificent buildings, is but a few yards from the squalid hovels of the poor. The Pasha's palace adjoins the paraffin-tin-covered mud hut of the *fellahin*. Exquisite Saracenic work may still be seen amidst the filth of a poverty-stricken native quarter. The Rolls-Royce motor car of the rich Egyptian passes the old donkey *diligence* of the indigent Berber. The rich fertile land is separated by but a yard from the barren desert sand. The grand and awe-

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inspiring monuments of antiquity overshadow the mean hovels of the decadent descendants of their builders. The European rubs shoulders with representatives of almost every race under the sun. Close to the up-to-date business establishments of the European quarter are the old bazaars of the native, where business is carried on to-day almost as it was 3000 years ago. It is not true that the East knows no change. It does change, but so slowly as to be almost imperceptible.

I have engaged in Christian work among over a score of native races, but it was not until I had to do with the Egyptians that I found it all but impossible to have for them that respect and love which had been evoked by the Chinese, Japanese, Maories, the South Sea Islanders, etc., among whom my lot had been previously cast. The good old Book foretold 2400 years ago that the Egyptian "should be the basest of all Kingdoms," and that statement is true to-day. There are, of course, splendid exceptions to the general rule, but the average lower class native is untrustworthy, a liar, and a plausible one at that.

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He loves bargaining, as the following conversation, which took place in my tent, will show.

A pedlar was trying to sell me some antiquers (antiques). Among them was a scarab. I asked him, "How much?"

"Two hundred piastres."

"No good, too much!"

"I sell him you one hundred and eighty piastres."

"No, perhaps it was made in Luxor (world-famous—or perhaps it would be more correct to say infamous—as being the place where spurious "antiques" are manufactured).

"No, dis real antiquer, me swear it by Mohammed—me find him in King's grave; him real, him goot, him cheap."

"Too much."

"You take it? One hundred and fifty piastres?"

"No!"

"One hundred?"

"No good. *Imshi*" (go away!).

"Fifty?"

"*Imshi*."

"Twenty?"

"Too much."

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" Five ? "

" No, I don't want it."

" Two piastre (equivalent to five pence) ?
You take him; ver goot, ver nice—real
antiquer."

" No, won't give you a *millieme* (one
farthing)."

Then Chaplain-Major Grant, who was with
me, said to him, " How much do you charge
for scarabs ? "

" It 'pends on who me sell him to ? "

" What do you mean ? "

" If Melican man come along and he want
scarab, me sell him to him for two hundred
piastres ; if Inglese (English) tourist, me
charge him one hundred ; if Australian,
seventy-five piastres ; if New Zealander, me
take fifty ; if Egyptian, half piastre. Melican
he got plenty money. Inglese not so much.
Australian he throw money about. Egyptian
he know scarab made Luxor : he no give
more than half piastre. This scarab no
goot."

" Why do you tell us that ? "

" Me go away now, not come back Cairo ;
me no care you not take anything."

With the native, deception is no sin when

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dealing with a Christian ; they are not in the least ashamed when their lies are found out. They have one price for the soldier, another for the officer. I found I saved nearly fifty per cent. on my purchases by getting my orderly to do my shopping instead of doing it personally.

Without doubt the most interesting and fascinating place in Cairo is the far-famed Muski. Each lane in this district is devoted to the sale of one particular article. For example, the goldsmiths—mostly Copts—who achieve the most intricate workmanship with the very same kind of tools as those used by their ancestors 4000 or 5000 years ago—have their shops in an exceedingly narrow lane, in places not more than five feet broad. The brass workers and the carpet sellers have each their street ; their shops are often not more than eight feet deep, and six feet broad. Despite the noisome smells, the endless jostling of the crowd, and the insistent and incessant importunity of the tradespeople, there is much to interest and instruct the European.

Some of the larger shops in the Muski have magnificent show-rooms : in one I was shown

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a Turkish carpet of moderate size for which the seller asked two thousand guineas ; a bedstead inlaid with silver and mother-o'-pearl—£800. In one of these warehouses I was informed that the insurance covered stock valued at half a million pounds.

Some very amusing advertisements were displayed, with a view to procuring the coveted custom of the Colonial troops ; I give a few of them.

A Greek restaurant had the following :

"ALL SORTS OF SPIRITS SOLED HERE."

I was informed by those who were better qualified than I was to express an opinion that it was chiefly "bad sorts."

Another restaurant had for its sign these cryptic words :

"SQUAR DINKUM FEED,"

which was intended to convey to the passer-by the information that a good square meal could be procured inside.

A liquor bar held out the following inducement to Colonials :

"AUSTRALIANS DONE HERE,"

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and it was rumoured that they were,—
“done brown!”

A similar advertisement read:

“THE BEST LICKER IS SOLED ONLY IN THIS
ESTABLISHMENT.”

The advent of our troops caused numberless restaurants to spring into existence, each such place being, of course, a saloon as well as an eating-house, and names such as “The Melbourne Buffet,” “The Sidney Saloon,” “Ballarat Bar,” “Auckland Restaurant,” etc., etc., were bestowed on them. But the most amusing advertisement was that of two Egyptians, who opened a laundry near the Zeitoun camp, and whose sign read,

“TWO EGYPTIANS WANT WASHING, VERY
CHEAP, VERY NICE.”

The first part of this advertisement was undeniably true; in fact, I have not yet met a lower-class Egyptian who didn't need washing very badly. They are unbelievably dirty. The Mohammedan mother never washes her child, or suffers it to be washed, until it is over six months old. To bathe the poor infant would, according to their idea, be but to invite evil spirits (ginns) to enter

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into it. Unfortunately, however, they apparently forget to wash it when the six months have passed, being, I suppose, under the impression that cleanliness is a luxury that can safely be dispensed with.

The poor children of heathenism, brought up amidst dirt and squalor, hearing the foulest of foul talk, rarely educated save by the Christian missionary — what chance have they? Is it to be marvelled at that nearly seventy-five per cent. of them die before they reach the age of knowing good from evil? Is it not far better that they should? I may be unorthodox, but it is my profound conviction that there will be found in the eternal presence of Him who said "Suffer little children to come unto Me" more heathen children than many Christians seem to imagine. To say, as one good but narrow man (that is, if a person can be "good" in the truest sense of the word, and at the same time be "narrow") did when speaking of them, "They were not baptised, and, of course, there was no hope for them," is simply inconceivable. "If God didn't have mercy on those poor kids," said a blunt, rough Christian soldier to me when repeating the first remark, "I

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wouldn't have much to do with Him. I don't see a word in the Bible which says that children who are not old enough to believe should be baptised, and God is not the sort to condemn unjustly any child for something over which it had no control, and for which no one could blame it. I couldn't stick it (the statement), and told him straight that to believe what he did was to insult not only God's love, but God's brains."

I am absolutely convinced that the majority of these children of heathenism will be saved.

Although poor, although ill-housed and ill-clad, even the lowest class seem to have sufficient to eat. The mildness of the climate is such that the lack of what we would consider sufficient shelter and clothing does not seem seriously to affect the health of the people.

It is, so old residents of Egypt have informed me, impossible to compare the present condition of the lower classes in Egypt with what it was prior to the British occupation. The days of the enforced *Corvée* when thousands of breadwinners were dragged from their homes and fields and compelled to work without pay for months and years in order to gratify the insenate ambition or sordid

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avarice of some Pasha have happily gone for ever. Never in her history has Egypt been so fairly governed ; never has she as a nation been so prosperous. That is not to say that we as a nation are loved. We are respected and feared, welcomed by the Copt, who for the first time for six hundred years dwells in safety, but disliked by the average Mohammedan. The latter, uneducated and consequently bigoted, would, I verily believe, prefer to be cruelly oppressed by one of his own religion than to be justly ruled by the " Unbeliever."

But much as British rule, despite the fact that it has been hampered by the existence of the " Capitulations," has accomplished, it has until now been unable to ameliorate the condition of the Mohammedan women. " Cribbed, cabined, and confined " by her religion, the creature rather than the companion of man, condemned to suffer degradation, whilst man is exalted, there is but one Hope for her, one Friend, one Saviour—our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is significant that one rarely sees a native woman (other than a Copt), over the age of fifty. I remarked on this to a man of

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wide and varied experience in Mohammedan countries, and asked him if he had noticed this, and, if it were the case, how he accounted for it? He replied that it was unhappily only too true, and that from his knowledge of the real condition of their lives it was the hardships they endured, the neglect, the absence of all that made life worth living, that caused so many to die prematurely.

Of course there are, I am glad to say, many splendid exceptions among the Mohammedans in which the women are well cared for and loved despite the fact that they are past middle age, but what I have said unfortunately is true in the majority of cases. Polygamy, the fatal facility of divorce that obtains among Mohammedans, the perpetual friction in the *harem* between the favourite wife and the other more unfortunate wives, the degradation of womanhood, should create in our minds a deep sympathy for these poor unfortunates.

No man can compare the lot of women in a Christian land with the condition of women in Mohammedan countries. The difference is as great as that existent between the respective religions.

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I have had pointed out to me the house of an Egyptian who, so I was informed by a credible authority, although under forty years of age, had had over thirty wives, whom he had divorced upon the slenderest of pretexts. Another Egyptian, a wealthy landowner in Southern Egypt, had been the husband of over thirty-five wives, and was the proud father of more than a hundred children. Educated Mohammedans, however, have in conversation with me deplored these conditions most earnestly and wholeheartedly.

I have mentioned these facts about the low status of womanhood in general, and wifehood in particular, since it accounts to no inconsiderable extent for the awful immorality that unhappily exists in Cairo. There is but one life, and that a life of shame, remaining for these poor creatures who by the laws of facile divorce inculcated by Mohammed are thrust out into a censorious, man-ruled world.

CHAPTER IV

IN THE ESBEKIA AND FISHMARKET

I FEEL compelled to place before the public the real truth concerning the flagrant and unblushing immorality which is so manifest in certain districts of Cairo. I do so with considerable diffidence, since I am only too conscious that my motives in thus writing are likely to be grossly misinterpreted, and that I lay myself open to the charge of being either egotistic or prurient.

Much exaggerated reports of the ill-behaviour of our Australian and New Zealand troops have been circulated through the length and breadth of the Commonwealth and the Dominion. Statements have been made which infer, if they do not actually state, that the great majority of our gallant soldiers were guilty of sins of impurity during the period when they were camped near Cairo. Owing to the nature of my work in the slums of that city I am better qualified

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than many to give the lie direct to these reports.

I also desire to place before my readers, as plainly as I possibly can, the actual conditions prevailing in these quarters, that they may to some extent realise the terrible temptations to which our boys were exposed, and so be the more disposed to temper judgment with mercy to those who have fallen.

I must, first of all, ask that it be borne in mind that tens of thousands of British, Australian, and New Zealand troops were stationed in and near Cairo. In every large body of men there will be necessarily a proportion of "rotters" or "wasters." Five per cent. of these make more disturbance and create more rumour than the remaining ninety-five per cent. who live clean, wholesome lives. To reflect on the morality of a large majority because of the immorality of a small minority is not only foolish but wicked. I here deliberately state that in a previous ministry of nearly seventeen years I have not met so many noble men in the same space of time as I have during the eighteen months I have been privileged to be a chaplain with

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the *New Zealand Expeditionary Force*. The very best of our youth are to be found in the ranks—men of culture, refinement, and religion, who despite their environment rose superior to it, and by their manly, clean, wholesome lives did good to all with whom they came in contact. In justice to these I feel it my bounden duty to justify the larger proportion of our men from the cowardly innuendos hurled at their heads by “arm-chair” critics who hadn’t the “grit and go” to do what those they so freely criticise have done—resign the comforts of home and fight, in many cases unto death, for King and country.

I know Australia from North to South, from East to West. There is scarcely a town of any size which I have not visited. Nearly twenty years ago I worked among all classes of men throughout Australia and consequently know personally the social conditions of that great country. I have also travelled New Zealand from the North Cape to the Bluff. Realising, therefore, the favourable moral atmosphere in which the majority of our Colonial boys have been brought up, and knowing, as I know, the new, startling,

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and all but overwhelming temptations of an Eastern town, especially a city which bears such an ill-repute as Cairo, I say that to me the marvel is *not that so many but that so few fell.*

We arrived in Zeitoun on or about the 4th of December 1914, and before a week had passed tales, more or less exaggerated, were being told of the fearful prevalence of vice in its very worst and most revolting forms. The notorious "Wassah," the sights to be seen there, the shamelessness of the women, the effrontery of the pimps, became common talk.

Realising to some extent the awfulness of the situation and the crying need that something should be done for our boys, I consulted Chaplain-Major Luxford, the chief chaplain of the N.Z.E. Force. He is an officer for whom I had and have, though in an increased measure, a high opinion, and in whose judgment I reposed the greatest confidence. His opinion was that we as chaplains should rebuke this vice whenever occasion served, but should personally abstain from visiting the slums. I understood the reason that led him to this opinion, but was still, in my own

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mind, far from being convinced that he was right. So, in deference to his wish, I desisted for a fortnight from going near the notorious streets.

However, one evening whilst reading my Bible, these words of the Master rang insistently in my ears: "I am come to seek and to save that which was lost," and coupled thereto, "As the Father has sent Me even so send I you." In these words I recognised what the Duke of Wellington termed "my marching orders." I knew, as Major Luxford had hinted, that my motives would be liable to be misconstrued, and while I thought over the matter was much inclined to choose the path of least resistance. I remembered how it was prophetically stated of the Lord Jesus that He "became the song of the drunkard" and was called, and deservedly so, the "friend of publicans and sinners." He not only "made Himself of no reputation" but lost all reputation, from the view-point of the religious world of His day, and I, since "the servant cannot be greater than His Master," must be content in seeking to "follow in His steps" to lose my reputation as He lost His.

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A business or professional man may forfeit his moral reputation and yet not suffer materially. But let a minister of religion have but the faintest breath of slander dim the lustre of his character and he were better dead. It was thus no light matter to me when I deliberately planned labours which I knew must inevitably expose me, in no small degree, to the malice of evil tongues, and which might wreck my whole future.

On New Year's day, 1915, a friend, a captain in the N.Z.M.C., asked me if I had seen the slums in the Esbekia, and on my replying in the negative, volunteered to drive me through them. That drive was an eye-opener. I knew that things were bad, but not how bad. It was a nightmare—inconceivably vile and horribly grotesque. The narrow, evil-smelling, tortuous lanes literally lined by these poor degraded women of almost every nationality, the foul cries of solicitation sounded in a veritable Babel of tongues, the barbaric dress and ornaments which many of them wore, the flaring lights, the flaunting evils, all combined to produce on the mind of a European an impression of unreality. " Things never could be as bad

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as this," one argued, "and therefore it must be a dream." But it was no dream. It was an infinitely awful reality. Each nationality seemed to rival the other in bestiality. Arabs, Egyptians (all Mohammedans; no Coptic girl is to be found earning her livelihood by prostitution), Circassians, Greeks, Syrians, Nubians, French and Italians were all represented. Thank God, however, there was not one British woman in that motley throng. The Government immediately deport any fallen English girl. For over half an hour we drove as fast as possible through street after street and lane after lane before we were clear of the shrieks of invitation, the coarse clamour, and the unspeakable sights of that veritable hell on earth.

Tennyson sings, "Things seen are mightier than things heard." I had thought the work to which I had determined to put my hand would be difficult, but I did not realise, until I had actually seen it for myself, the full immensity and hideous awfulness of the task. A feeling of impotence crept over me. What could I, single-handed, do against so many? Could anyone hope to combat, with any prospect of success, the rampant

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evils of these foul quarters? One could but try. Success lay in God's hands. From that day when I first had a vision of the exceeding sinfulness of the sexual sins of Cairo, with but few unavoidable exceptions I spent four hours each evening on three and sometimes five nights a week seeking to stem the foul tide of immorality that threatened to overwhelm so many of our soldiers. I made a point of doing this work on those nights which immediately followed the arrival in Cairo of fresh troops, whether *British, Australian, or New Zealander*, and on leave nights.

Various causes had contributed to making this saturnalia of lust so inexpressibly evil as it was at the time of which I write. These hapless women flocked into the city from Port Said, Alexandria, the country towns of Egypt, and from lands over the sea, to prey upon the thousands of British and Colonial troops. Cairo, long before the latter's arrival, had always been a haven of refuge, a last resort for the *demi-monde* of the various seaports on the Mediterranean.

Deleted at suggestion of Censor.

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Deleted at suggestion of Censor.

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Deleted at suggestion of Censor.

What is the number of these unfortunates ? That is the question which has often been put to me by those who knew the kind of work in which I had been engaged. I can only speak approximately of the actual numbers in Cairo. There are, I believe on good authority, two thousand three hundred licensed native women, and over eight hundred licensed European women. Exactly how many unlicensed native and European women ply their unholy trade no one can say, certainly they must number thousands. These licensed women, European and

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native, are for the most part herded together in a small area within close proximity to the most fashionable quarter in Cairo. Were it possible to give the exact total of all the licensed and unlicensed women I am persuaded the British world would stand aghast and with one voice demand that the city be purified. Unlicensed women are everywhere—in the “pensions,” in hotels, and in the hundreds of liquor bars which infest the city.¹ Despite the vigilance (?) of the police they infest the whole community in city and suburbs alike.

I do not desire to discuss at length the “pros and cons” as to the advisability of the Egyptian system of registration of these licensed women, other than to say that in my opinion more have fallen as the result of these women’s being able to assure the men that they were healthy, and backing their assurance by the production of a certificate, than through the unlicensed women who far outnumber their more favoured sisters.

The examination of these women must be necessarily perfunctory owing to the thou-

¹ The liquor trade in Egypt is in the hands of the Greeks.

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sands who report themselves weekly or fortnightly for that purpose, and the limited number of medical men available for that unpleasant duty. Such an inspection may to a limited extent prevent the spread of disease, but that is all that can be claimed for it. Any specialist in this particular form of disease will admit the absolute impossibility of pronouncing any woman to be free from venereal complaints unless a lengthy bacteriological examination extending over many days has been undertaken. If this is not done, and if certificates are issued after what is necessarily an inconclusive inspection, the result is only to lull men into sinning under a sense of fancied security. Scores of men have confessed to me that it was by the production of these certificates that they were induced to yield to the entreaties of the licensed courtesan.

All the present evils were accentuated by the fact that over thirty thousand Australians and New Zealanders (a number which was afterwards, of course, considerably increased), were suddenly quartered within easy reach of the city of Cairo. From lands where, happily, few sexual temptations prevail, they

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were plunged into the vortex of a notoriously evil Oriental city. Cooped up in transports for from six to eight weeks, under what to them was severe discipline, is it to be wondered at that the reaction was great ; that a certain proportion, loosed for the first time from the restraints of home and of a Christian land, should plunge into excess ; that, rejoicing in their new-found liberty, they should turn that liberty into license ; that, withheld from the use of intoxicants for weeks they should, in a city where nearly every shop sold liquor, drink to excess ? The greater number, nevertheless, I repeat, behaved themselves as worthy representatives of their respective colonies.

Over and above the causes which I have mentioned as contributing to the sad condition of affairs in Cairo was the liquor traffic. Had immorality been the only foe, the fight would not have been one-tenth as stern as it proved. I speak advisedly when I state that nine-tenths of the men who fell did so under the influence of strong drink. Alcohol anywhere tends to produce immorality. This is more evident in Cairo than in any other place where I have been.

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Pure alcohol is surprisingly cheap. In the Esbekia and Fishmarket there are numberless bars; in one street there is one every few yards. The liquor sellers act in many cases in collusion with the keepers of the houses of ill-fame, and freely permit the latter to use their bars as places for solicitation. Despite statements made to the contrary I am fully persuaded, as the result of my own experience in noting the effects produced on our men, that the liquor has been "doped" or drugged. I have seen men who assured me that though they had only drunk two or three glasses they had become stupefied, and remained in a comatose state for hours. One case I remember in which a man, a strictly moderate drinker, took but two glasses of whisky, and was for eighteen hours afterwards in a state of absolute insensibility. The effect produced, as I noted it, was to induce the normally moral man to become temporarily immoral. I have time and again seen men walk into a liquor bar as sober as men could be, and after one or two drinks behave like sexual maniacs. I have, not once but scores of times, followed these men into the houses

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of ill-fame, and found them in a state of insensibility or temporary insanity, and have by sheer force, before they could come to any harm, either carried or supported them out of the brothels, and sent or accompanied them to the railway station by cab or car.

One evening I was standing near a house of ill-fame in the Esbekia seeking to prevent, and to a great extent succeeding in preventing, men from entering, when I noticed a young fresh-faced New Zealander enter a bar nearly opposite. He was not there more than about ten minutes, when he came out, evidently under the influence of liquor, accompanied by a big Berber who was piloting him to the evil house for which he was "pimp" or "tout." I followed them, but when I had passed a turning in the lane, finding they had evidently turned down a side alley, I turned to my left, and was in time to see a door being shut. I put my shoulder against the door, burst it open, upsetting the woman who had closed it, and, entering, saw the New Zealand boy lying on a low bed insensible, his head nearly on the floor, whilst the Berber was searching his hip pocket. I promptly

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gave the robber a kick which sent him to the floor, and turned to place the soldier's head on the pillow. As I did so the Berber rose and rushed at me with a drawn knife. I stepped aside and caught him under the jaw with my right fist. He stopped rather suddenly and gave me no further trouble. The woman flew at me, and, before I could prevent her, scratched my face rather badly. When I had induced her to leave me alone I picked up the man, carried him into the Wagh el Birka, 200 yards, I suppose, away, and sent him in a cab to Zeitoun. He told me next morning when he regained consciousness that he had no recollection of anything that had transpired since his second glass of beer, and that two beers comprised all the drinks he had had that day.

The G.O.C., General Maxwell, was responsible, I believe, for ordering the compulsory inspection of liquors. The contents were analysed, and it shows how greatly adulteration was practised when *The Egyptian Mail*, some months after this inspection was instituted, stated that thirty-seven per cent. of the liquors analysed were adulterated.

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I am glad to say that this inspection, whilst it did not, as was scarcely to be expected, entirely abolish the "doping," exercised a by no means inconsiderable effect in ensuring that the soldiers had purer liquor. Certainly the number of those who were rendered temporarily unconscious as the result of the use of liquor considerably decreased.

I strongly suspect, however, that, in some cases, if not in many, the "drug," whatever it was, was not in the bottle of beer or whisky, but was added to the beer when it was in the glass, and consequently no analysis of the liquor in bottle or bulk would reveal its presence. This suspicion I have heard expressed by many soldiers who did not hesitate to state that they must have been drugged in that manner.

This unholy alliance which exists between the liquor seller and the prostitute is by no means confined to Egypt. I know of many cases in London, and other English cities. One thing is certain, banish the liquor, and before six months have passed nine-tenths of the unfortunate women would have to seek an honest means of procuring a liveli-

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hood. Hundreds upon hundreds of soldiers fall only because liquor has first benumbed their judgment, lessened their self-control, deadened their consciences, and quickened their passions.

CHAPTER V

EVILS OF CAIRO

It was in the first week of 1915 that I faced the ordeal of seeking to dissuade the soldiers from entering the bad houses in the Esbekia. One night I had been slumming near the bottom of Clot Bey Street when I saw some men, all more or less under the influence of liquor, going down a narrow business street that lies immediately behind the Hotel Bristol. I followed them and, to my great surprise, found that after proceeding along this street for a few hundred yards they turned to the right, and in a minute or two were in the midst of the worst slum (the Fishmarket) I had up to then seen. I thus quickly discovered how much greater was the task I had set myself than I had at first anticipated—instead of one I had two large districts in which to work. Subsequent research, unfortunately, still further increased the field of my labours. Weekly I discovered

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fresh houses outside the licensed area which it behoved me to watch with the view of preventing men from entering if possible.

It was a great and pleasant surprise to me to discover that, hateful and loathsome as my work was, the men to whom I spoke invariably took my word of warning and of counsel in good part. I never, to use their own expression, "shoved religion down their throats," or "preached at them." I felt instinctively that it was no use to assume any airs of conscious superiority—which, to tell the truth, I was far from feeling. I tried to regard each man as I would a younger brother, and a brother, who was, at that particular moment, fighting his best against the terrible stress and strain of a great temptation. To scold a man at such a moment would only tend to exasperate him and consequently do harm instead of good. What he wanted was that word of cheer which goes far to the warming of the heart, and towards inspiring that hope which presages victory. I invariably assumed that they were fighting to the best of their ability against defeat and consequent disgrace. God knew, although often it was hidden from my eyes, the brave

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struggle so many of them were putting up against the forces of evil without and within.

Of course I made many mistakes, but to the credit of the soldiers be it said that although I must have spoken to thousands I cannot remember more than two or three instances in which the men were offended. And in each of such instances they were very, very drunk.

One night, during the first week, I went up to an Australian soldier just as he was entering a house of ill-repute and said to him :

“ Don’t you think that this is a good place to be out of ? ”

He looked me up and down, noted my badge, and then said meaningly, “ I think so, Captain.” He paused and then resumed, “ *especially for parsons,*” laying great emphasis on the last few words.

I burst out laughing and replied, “ You got me that time ; aren’t you Irish ? ”

He assumed a most pronounced Irish brogue as he replied, “ Shure an I’m that.”

“ Where do you come from ? ”

He told me, and we stood at the door laughing and cracking jokes for a few moments

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until the opportunity arrived for me to tell him why I had taken up this work. He then said :

“ I’ll do what you say, your reverence, I’ll go home and be a good boy.”

“ Good-bye ; try to be good.”

I laughed and suggested that we should walk together to the station, which we did, and parted the very best of friends.

I had another encounter with an Irish lad who belonged to an English regiment. I happened to be standing at the entrance to one of these houses, outside of which over a hundred men were waiting to enter, and I spoke to each man just as he was about to cross the threshold. In the majority of instances I was successful in inducing them to desist, when up came this Irish soldier and said :

“ By gob ! ye’re a great praste, anyhow.”

“ Why ? ”

“ I’m a Roman Catholic,” he said.

“ Are you ? Better a good Roman Catholic than a bad Protestant.”

He had evidently mistaken me for a Roman Catholic, owing, I suppose, to the fact that I was clean-shaven, but now a dim suspicion

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of my orthodoxy seemed to flit across his mind. So he queried.

“Are you a Roman Catholic praste?”

“No,” I replied, “I’m a Baptist minister.”

“Well I’m d——d”

“I hope you won’t be,” I said. “Why?”

“By gob, if ye’re not a praste, ye’re d——d near good enough to be one.”

Having paid me the highest compliment in his power he left me chuckling over what he had said.

I have often thanked God for the saving gift of humour, and am persuaded that I should not have been able to bear the severe stress and strain of my slum work as long as I did had it not been possible even there to have occasionally a good laugh.

It is impossible to treat men as if they were turned out by machinery. Various men demand different methods. Each had his own peculiar individuality. Consequently I had to use every conceivable means in order to effect my desired purpose. A good joke was often, I found, the best lever. With others an appeal to their home life often touched a tender chord, as in the following instance.

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Going down the Diab Tiab, one of the worst lanes in one of the worst slums of Cairo, I saw immediately in the front of me a bright-faced New Zealander obviously hailing from one of the country districts. He, evidently acting on a sudden impulse, swung round to the left, and entered a vile Berberine house of ill-repute.

I followed him into the inner room. He apparently thought I was one of his "Cobbers" or companions, for he didn't turn round. I stepped up to him, and, laying my hand on his shoulder, said :

"Look here, my boy, you wouldn't like your people at home to know that you were in a place like this, would you ? "

He looked at me for a moment and recognised me. His eyes fell. Poor lad (he was not more than twenty), he was ashamed of my seeing his tears and said :

"God knows I wouldn't."

The women, of whom there were two in the room, broke out into voluble entreaties, but a sharp word and threatening gesture quickly reduced them to frightened silence.

He looked slowly round the tawdry, evil,

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and filthy room, at the black, painted, be-dizened creatures, and when I said :

“ Then for God’s sake, for your mother’s sake, for your own sake, get away from this vile hole.”

He gladly and willingly assented. We walked together, and when we came down to the Wagh el Birka street he stood still and said :

“ Thank you, Captain, I want to make you a promise.”

“ What is it, my lad ? ”

“ I want to promise you that I will never come near this hell again. I thought I could trust myself. I only came because my mates did. I want to make it impossible for me to return to the Esbekia, and so I promise you that I will never go to such a place, or near such a quarter again.”

A very few weeks elapsed before this boy came late one evening into my tent and yielded himself to the One who alone could save and keep. The next morning he wrote to his mother, telling her that he had done so, and, with a glad smile came up to me as I sat at the Y.M.C.A. table, and flinging the letter into the letter-box said :

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“That will tell them what they have longed and prayed for more than anything else.”

His after life attested to the reality of the change he professed.

It was, as may easily be imagined, no easy matter to dissuade men when they were sober, but I had to resort to all sorts of ruses to prevent intoxicated men from entering these vile houses. Many a time I have spent a full half-hour talking and arguing, on some other subject, of course, with semi-intoxicated men, until I was able to rush them down to the station or tram, assuming, I am afraid, a greater fear than I really felt lest they should miss their train or tram and consequently spend their night in the guard-room, and the following morning receive from the O.C. that military panacea for all ills, “C.B.,” which is not, as the non-military person might be disposed to imagine, an award for merit, but on the other hand a reward for demerit which entails “Confinement to Barracks.”

One night I had played this, I trust, allowable trick, and had managed to persuade about six half-drunks of the absolute necessity

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of hurrying home to avoid punishment, had got them on the Clot Bey tram, when one of them, who had just enough wit left to perceive that he and his companions had been outwitted, shook his forefinger solemnly before my face and said :

“ Oh yes, I-m drunk, but not too d——d drunk to know that I’ve been—di-did—(what’s the blamed word?)—ah! I’ve got it—diddled; and you, Captain, for all you look so blessed innocent, is the bloke that’s did-did-diddelled us,” and all the way to camp he gloated over the discomfiture of his “fooled coppers.”

Those who have had personal knowledge of the slums of London, Paris, Berlin, Naples, New York, Buenos Ayres, and San Francisco have assured me that the moral condition of Cairo is not worse than in those cities. But when I have questioned them as to whether that solicitation which is so open and so shameless in Cairo is permitted in any of the above-mentioned cities, they have one and all admitted that in that respect Cairo possessed an unenviable pre-eminence.

The Wagh el Birka is a street which lies in close proximity to fashionable hotels like

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Shepherd's and the Continental. In it the appalling scenes of moral degradation can be witnessed in the broad light of day. Nearly all the houses in it are occupied by licensed women. Nearly every window has a balcony, and since many of the houses are three-storied, a large number, sometimes nearly and often over twenty women, may be seen in one house leaning over the balconies, in every stage of undress, shouting out their foul invitations to passers-by. This street has become one of the show places of Cairo, and any afternoon after 4 p.m and evening thousands of soldiers promenade the street beneath, gazing at and passing remarks upon these shameless creatures. Unhappily it became the custom for the older resident soldiers to take their newly arrived comrades to view this hideous exhibition of unblushing depravity. The result is obvious. Many men who had no intention of falling became habituated to the foul and suggestive sights, and as Pope says :

“ Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen,
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.”

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So, many fell, and fell grievously. Unhappily this street is but one of the many where similar if not worse sights may be seen in broad daylight. For obvious reasons I cannot give in detail descriptions of the incredible sights which not only I, but thousands of young soldiers, have witnessed.

One Saturday between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. I piloted Colonel C. E. R. Mackesy (O.C. of my regiment, the Auckland Mounted Rifles) through these districts, and he can confirm the fact of the unmentionable sights which we on that occasion witnessed. The actors in this indescribable scene were without exception licensed women.

Temptation will exist as long as this present age endures. I doubt whether it would be to the advantage of mankind that it should cease. But normal temptation is one thing, abnormal temptation another. The one is essential to goodness, the other destructive of morality. I venture to say that the particular temptations of which I dare do no more than hint, permitted in Cairo, are such as no Government should tolerate for a day.

Throughout Australia and New Zealand

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there has been for some time a rapidly increasing dissatisfaction that our men should be exposed to these all but overwhelming sensual temptations. I take this extract from a letter I received from a lady in South Australia. She says :

“ I have given three boys to the service of their King and country. I would not recall them if I could. I am convinced our cause is just. What I fear for them more than death is disgrace. I have heard of some men who have been sent back here as the result of their sins, and sometimes I tremble for the safety of my boys. Do help them if you can.”

Parents' letters couched in the same strain have reached me from all the Australian states and the Dominion of New Zealand.

“ We as Colonials have a right to demand that our men, who have shown such marvellous patriotism, should be protected from such extraordinary temptations as prevail in Cairo, and to a lesser degree in Alexandria,” is the burden of their cry.

No reason, save a strategic one, can justify the placing of the camps so near to the great cities. The loss in numbers from

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disease will, if ever published, astonish the world.

I desire once again to emphasise that when one knows first-hand the real magnitude of the sensualities of Cairo the marvel is that such a large proportion of our soldiers escaped unscathed. I have been compelled to hint at certain things, but no hints, however strong, can convey to a non-resident any real sense of the full enormity of the iniquities of Egypt.

CHAPTER VI

MORE EVILS OF CAIRO

PERHAPS the most insidious form of temptation is that presented in the "can-cans." These places are often represented by the touts as being merely dance rooms, and the invitation is generally couched in these words :

"Can-can place, very nice, very s'lect, real native dances."

And the unsophisticated stranger is taken to what is really a brothel of the worst type where sensuous dances are performed by either nude or very partially clad women. In fact, as far as I was able to learn, every "can-can" is a brothel and nearly every native brothel is a "can-can." It is impossible to estimate the number of men who have been reached and ruined in these particular hell-houses.

One night down at the Fishmarket I saw a group of from twelve to fifteen British and New Zealanders enter a "can-can." I

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followed them as they stood waiting for the disgusting and suggestive dance to commence, and spoke to them plainly as to their absolute folly in thus tempting temptation, and with all the power I possessed urged them for their own good and for the sake of their people at home to come out. They listened to me dumbfounded, and when I had finished, their natural leader thanked me and, turning to the others, said :

“ Look here, boys, the Old Captain’s on the square, and it is up to us to clear out.”

I interviewed the head woman, and bluffed her into returning the money the men had paid (five piastres or about one shilling each), much to her disgust and their surprise.

I can, however, remember time and again having to use not only moral but physical force in clearing these “ can-cans ” of mere boys who had been induced to attend them by their vile touts. I failed, I think, only about a dozen times in persuading men to leave these disgusting performances, and in each case the majority of the men who refused to leave were very much under the influence of liquor.

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Another pest is the "tout." He is ubiquitous. His methods may vary, but his one aim is to inveigle men to these evil houses. Sometimes he places in the hand of a passer-by an apparently innocent card which bears the address of some infamous woman; often he seeks to stir up the passions of some young soldier, by showing him under the pledge of strictest secrecy the vilest of vile photographs; but more often he offers to show the soldier some place where "ladies, very s'lect, very pitty, live." There must be in Cairo hundreds, perhaps thousands, of these despicable parasites. Recently (I wrote this in December 1915) the police took active steps to rid the city of this class, happily with some success.

It has always afforded me the keenest pleasure to administer well-deserved physical chastisement to members of this unholy and numerous profession. When I first commenced slumming it was an easy matter to catch them red-handed, but as I and the nature of my work became better known it was extremely difficult. I was foolishly congratulating myself on the evident fact that there were evidently fewer "pimps" in the Esbekia

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after two months labour therein, and it was not until I was informed by an Arabic-speaking Cairo gentleman who accompanied me one night on my rounds that men and boys were detailed to watch for me, and my appearance anywhere reported by them, was quite sufficient to make all the rest of these gentry disappear for the time being.

There was one "tout" who was only too successful in his profession. I often yearned to have a touching interview with him, and impatiently awaited the opportunity. At last one night, from the other side of the street, I saw him talking to some British soldiers who were little more than boys. Pretending not to see him I passed on, went up a side street, doubled back, and keeping well in the shade I listened to him exercising all his eloquence, which was great, and his English, which was small, in the endeavour to induce them to patronise the house for which he was touting. Making myself appear as small as possible I advised the lads to "tell him to clear out." My gentleman was virtuously indignant.

"What for you say that? Good house. Come on, sirs," addressing the soldiers.

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He had incautiously come too near. I made a jump, caught him by the scruff of his neck, twisted his *gallabia*, and proceeded to administer with a good sjambok the soundest thrashing he had ever received. He wept profusely and howled loudly. At length, my right arm becoming somewhat tired, and sympathising with him in his evident desire to leave my presence, I helped him a few yards with a well-placed kick, and then he ran. When he had got half a chain away, just like a whipped puppy he suddenly realised the awfulness of the torture to which he had been subjected, and let out a shriek of concentrated agony. It was very comical. The crowd which had rapidly congregated burst into a veritable chorus of laughter (there are few things an Egyptian seems to enjoy more than seeing another thrashed,) and the last we saw of him he was still running. I never saw that gentleman again.

Unfortunately, as soon as the novelty of visiting the evil native quarter had worn off, the more evil-disposed men began to frequent the Esbekia European quarter of the city. These women were as bad, if not worse, than their darker-hued sisters. Their greater

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attractiveness, of course, increased the danger, and more men owed their downfall and consequent disease to them than to the natives.

One night I was standing at the door of one of these better-class (?) European houses, speaking to the men as they were about to enter, and seeking to dissuade them. My efforts, I am thankful to say, were that night crowned with considerable success. Out of over a hundred men who were apparently waiting to enter I do not think ten passed me. As soon as my work began to tell, the women came down from the rooms above and gathering behind cursed me. I had been cursed before, but never so heartily and certainly never in so many tongues. In every language of the Levant, in French, Arabic, Italian, Greek, and broken English, they gave full vent to their individual and collective opinion of me, and, needless to say, their opinion was the reverse of flattering, and they evinced no hesitation in calling a spade a spade. If I have survived that cursing with any good opinion as to my personal appearance or character they are certainly not to blame. I stood it,

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smiling. At last, enraged at the fact that not a single man was entering their house, the Madam (the woman who owned the place), as they generally did on similar occasions, tried to stir up a riot. She piteously appealed to the men "to knock the old beggar down," "not to let grandfather (my slum name) spoil them in their pleasures," and urged them "to be men and show they weren't afraid of their officers." I have left out certain numerous and entirely unnecessary adjectives with which she garnished her speech. This last appeal was absolutely unneeded, for if there is an Australian who is afraid of his officer or anyone or anything, I have never met him. Three very drunk Australians drew their bayonets (this happened before the order was made prohibiting the men from wearing their bayonets in the city), and, loudly proclaiming their intention of "sticking the old beggar," tried to get through the crowd. The moment the riot commenced Madam was frightened. Jumping behind me, so as to be nearer the door and safety, she said :

"You frightened?"

I was a bit, but was not going to let her

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have the satisfaction of knowing it, so I replied "No."

"Me can't comprehend you English, you not flightened anything, not even God, I think."

I could not help laughing at such a statement, coming as it did from such a source.

The men who, however, had taken my warning to heart, said to me reassuringly, "That's all right, Captain, we'll stand by you," and then to the crowd, "The Old Captain (my name among the soldiers in evident allusion to my white hair) is right. Let us stick to him."

The small party of drunken Australians were still pressing in my direction through the crowd, which, with a laudable and pardonable desire to see the fun, divided as quickly as possible. My adherents caught them by the scruff of their necks, banged their heads against the opposite wall, and lending them substantial aid with the toes of their boots, hurried them down to the main street.

The leader of my party came up to me and said, "What shall we do with these

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blessed women?" I turned to the latter and urged them to go into the house and shut the door. They, for the most part, took my advice, but those who did not were seized by their shoulders, rushed into the house, and urged in very strong language to stay there and keep the door shut unless they wanted trouble. This advice was acted upon.

A considerable amount of mental and spiritual as well as physical strain resulted from long continuance in this work. The insufferable and indescribable stench was nauseating in the extreme. After hours of walking and talking in the Esbekia or Fishmarket it was a great relief to leave the horrors of the slums and breathe once more the purer air of the European quarter in Cairo. Night after night when I reached my tent I was too tired to sleep. This, at last, told on my health to such an extent that I became subject to serious internal troubles, and the P.M.O. ordered me to cease from the slum work. It was with a sad heart that I perforce acquiesced in the M.O.'s decision. Loathsome and unwholesome as were my labours,

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I had grown to prize wonderfully the privilege of being able in some degree to help our lads in the time of their great temptations. Another reason increased my grief at having to relinquish this work, and that was this: During the first few months I met with great opposition, was often mobbed by the "pimps" and their satellites, and on two occasions nearly stabbed, but during the last five months I had met with practically no opposition from either the women, "pimps," or soldiers. In fact, on the contrary, many of the latter constituted themselves my unofficial body-guard. I tender to them my heartiest thanks. Some of them I know laid down their lives on the peninsula, but others are at the present (February 1916) still on active service.

I cannot speak too highly of the way in which the men met my overtures. Never, unless very, very intoxicated, did they resent my interference. Often, in fact hundreds of times, they voluntarily thanked me for what they were good enough to term my "real interest in them." The roughest and toughest among them have on many occasions shown their appreciation. One

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such man urged me to accept a large sum of money as a token of his gratitude, and was genuinely hurt when I, of course, refused.

Although I was denied the privilege of seeing service on Gallipoli, despite my earnest endeavours to get there, I am in a position to bear my willing and hearty tribute to the magnificent results evident in Cairo which followed the splendid labours of the New Zealand padres at the front. They were Chaplain-Major Luxford (Methodist), whose courtesy, consideration, and absolute fairness peculiarly qualified him for the position of Senior Chaplain. (An ambulance orderly told me that when this padre was being carried down the hill, wounded nigh unto death, he begged the stretcher-bearers to put him down and take in his place a private who was not nearly so seriously injured): Chaplain-Major Grant (Presbyterian), one of God's gentlemen, who laid down his life in an enemy trench seeking to save the wounded: Chaplain-Captain Dore (Roman Catholic) of my own regiment, the Auckland Mounted Rifles, who by his merry Irish wit cheered many during the dark hours, and

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by his absolute unselfishness and fearlessness won the regard of all. (He was wounded severely and is partially paralysed as the result): Chaplain-Captain Taylor (Anglican), whose frail-looking frame concealed an indomitable spirit, and whose faithful and long-continued labours, despite wounds and disease, attested his devotion to his Master and to the men he served so well: Chaplain-Captain Bush King (Anglican), of whose work the men speak so highly: and last, but not least, Chaplain-Captain King (Presbyterian) who, I believe, put in a longer period of service than any other chaplain on the peninsula. Their respective churches may be pardonably proud of their representatives, and I, though a Base padre (perhaps, to avoid misunderstanding, I had better say a chaplain at the Base), bear testimony to the fact that in many cases the changed attitude to religion manifested by the returned soldiers was due to the practical Christianity they had seen exemplified in the lives of the padres and Christian men at the front. I know I reaped where they had sown, and from the time when the wounded and sick returned to Cairo,

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my work in the slums was aided by the evidently increased respect for the "padre."

The men had, in addition, been face to face, night and day, with death, and consequently they viewed life from a new standpoint. They had perforce considered eternal verities and were in consequence much more disposed to listen to the "Glory of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

I was agreeably surprised to note the keen and intelligent interest that such a large number evinced in things Egyptian. When a lecture on "Egypt" was announced to be held in any camp Y.M.C.A., the tent was certain to be crowded. Many became in a surprisingly short time remarkably well-informed as to the history of the various ruins, etc. It was impossible to visit any relics of antiquity without meeting crowds of soldiers.

Others became ardent, and in several cases fairly successful, curio-hunters. The Zeitoun camp is pitched, as I have already said, on a portion of the site of the old university city of On. Hard by was the famous Materieh Obelisk which, since it bears the

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Cartouche Amenemhetl, must be about 5000 years old ; less than half a mile away was the old cemetery of On. In this cemetery our boys were fortunate enough to unearth not merely the common " mummy beads " but objects of real historical worth and value, which, with the Colonial's eye to business, they sold at good prices to the museum. Encouraged by their success I hired two Arabs, borrowed three shovels, and on a burning hot summer afternoon commenced an excavation at what I judged to be a promising tomb. We dug and perspired, perspired and dug, and at last our united labours resulted in one mummy bead half the size of a wax match, which I promptly lost. One private of the Auckland Mounted Rifles discovered a fairly large marble covered with hieroglyphics, for which he received fourteen pounds. An Otago lad (I cannot vouch for the exact truth of this) was so fortunate as to unearth the ring of the executioner of On, for which he received over £100.

Every time I visited the great Cairo Museum at Bulac there were scores of soldiers examining with the greatest interest the

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various great statues and mummies, notably that of the supposed Pharaoh of the Exodus, and I was always called upon to explain how it was possible for the Pharaoh, who they invariably asserted had been drowned in the Red Sea, to be lying there before them. My explanation was, firstly, that it is possible for a man to be drowned and his body recovered and mummified; secondly, that neither Moses nor the inspired Miriam record that Pharaoh was drowned; had he been so they would scarcely have failed to mention it; also I pointed out that possibly Pharaoh, like many another king, stayed in a safe place when the conflict was impending, or perhaps it would be more charitable to assume that, with the egotism which seemed then to be the heritage of those in high places, he realised how intensely valuable his life was to his people and declined to endanger their welfare by risking such a valuable national asset. Hundreds of boys, when on leave, used to congregate at the Muski, examining and buying quaint eastern curios. It is a libel to accuse them all, as has been done, of spending their pay on riotous living. Some did, but the vast majority did

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not. I say without fear of contradiction that tens of thousands of pounds were spent procuring gifts for the "old folks," and some of the young folk too, especially those of the fairer sex. Time and again I have known men to be unable to buy even the cheapest articles at the Y.M.C.A. because, as they explained, their last pay had been expended in the purchase of presents for loved ones in the home-lands.

The citadel built by Sal-a-deen—usually called Saladin, the mighty and worthy antagonist of our King Richard I.—was one of the favourite resorts of our men.

Thousands of men nightly took advantage of the splendid facilities afforded them by the Y.M.C.A. and spent their evenings in the tents at concerts, lectures, or writing letters.

Every cinema in the city and suburbs was literally packed with soldiers, and each concert and theatrical entertainment was liberally patronised.

I mention these facts to show that instead of a large proportion of our men nightly visiting the slums, as has been alleged, only a very small percentage were in the habit of so doing. Had all made a practice of going

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down the "Esbekia" and "Fishmarket" there would scarcely have been standing room in those districts. I am certain that not five per cent. of our Colonial troops made a habit of frequenting these evil slums.

CHAPTER VII

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE

DESCRIPTION of conditions so deplorable, naturally leads to suggestions towards remedying them. The following points are therefore put forward for consideration by all who feel deeply the need that something should be done :

(1) All those districts that at present are to all intents and purposes set apart for licensed vice should be cleansed : all licensed women should be deported from the country. This is not only possible, since it has been done under similar conditions elsewhere, but eminently reasonable. The only way to cure a cancer is to excise it. Failing this, should the authorities consider it absolutely essential to the well-being (?), health (?), and happiness (?) of the city that such a parade of such a vice should continue to exist, then let them

(2) Remove these women to a more remote

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part of the city. They at present reside where they can ply their unholy trade to the highest possible advantage.

(3) In case the authorities do not deport them or remove them from their present favourite strategical position, then surely what they did at Alexandria is practicable in Cairo, viz. :—to proclaim a district out of bounds to troops and enforce the prohibition.

(4) *Deliberate, determined and persistent efforts* should be made to prohibit solicitation by word or act on the part of either women or “touts.” This has been done to great advantage in many parts of the colonies, and there is no reason on earth why a strong Government could not do it here. In New Zealand, for example, a case of “solicitation” is marvellously rare.

Of course, objections will be raised. It is worth while stating some of the stock “difficulties” in order to meet them at once with adequate answers.

First.—“It is impossible to deport these women. They must live somewhere.”

The latter I grant. I have no objection to their living, but a great objection to the

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way they make their living. If they persist in pursuing their present trade they should go. If "it is impossible to deport them," how then did the authorities cleanse other Eastern cities which had as unsavoury a reputation as that which now obtains in Cairo.

Let us look at the question from another point of view.

The authorities say by their actions: "It is impossible to cleanse Cairo," but is it impossible? It only requires the present state of affairs to continue to ensure thousands of British troops being poisoned by a foul disease, and to disseminate, as they no doubt will, that disease in hundreds of places where it is at present practically non-existent.

Second.—"It would cost too much to remove these women to a more remote position in the city."

Let us consider what it costs the British nation if one Australian or New Zealander contracts this disease in its worst form. *First*, it means that when every man is needed for the defence of the Empire one man is lost. Far better for him and his had he died. *Secondly*, that one man has

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cost in equipment, training, proportional cost in military administration, transport, food, upkeep, etc. etc., at least £250 : multiply that sum by many hundreds and perhaps thousands, and the sum total will be, I fear, appalling.

At present the existence of these licensed and unlicensed women is a menace to the safety of the Empire. They have lost the British Army in actual fighting power—I leave the proper authorities to say how many—regiments. That body of men, efficient, might win a battle that would decide a campaign which might end gloriously the whole war. Useless, they are not only a terrible drag, but entail an enormous, unnecessary expenditure.

What does the toleration of these women cost parents in shame and sorrow over the fall of promising sons? Disgrace, disease, and death have befallen many men, who under normal temptations would have remained straight, but under the indescribably abnormal temptations of the Esbekia and Fishmarket districts have succumbed.

WHICH COST IS THE GREATER ?

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Third.—"Declaring the districts out of bounds is useless. It could not be enforced."

This has been done in Alexandria. Discipline is useless if it cannot be enforced. Extend the powers of the pickets. Get picked men to form a permanent picket, and instead of using them as is done only to search these houses at a certain hour for "drunks" and "out-lates" let them prevent these men from entering the districts.

The fence is of more use at the top of the cliff than the ambulance at the bottom.

Fourth.—"With the native police it is impossible to prevent solicitation." Another plea made to me by a highly-placed Egyptian official (an Englishman).

Perhaps so. I am inclined to believe it, since with my own eyes I have seen nude European and native women, within two yards of a laughing native policeman, indulge in indescribably vile and filthy contortions in the open street, and in the full light of day. But let a dozen honest British policemen report each case they see, and let the magistrate severely punish these women,

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and they would cease to importune. Remember, the greatest danger is from the hundreds of European women, for it is a fact that the evil native women of Cairo do not make their main living from soldiers but from natives, and the same holds true to a lesser extent of the European women.

As I have already stated, in November 1915 the Police commenced a crusade against the "touts." Many were caught and flogged. No mercy should be shown to these vile parasites. Flogging is not enough; flogging coupled with hard labour for a long period, might, and I believe would, prove efficacious.

The Government have, in several cases, to my knowledge prohibited certain women of the undesirable class from landing in Egypt, and have prosecuted and punished agents of this infamous "White SLAVE Traffic."

Under the present martial law this power could be exercised in the wholesale deportation of these women to the lands from which they came. Failing that, it would be infinitely cheaper to isolate them than to license them to be a menace to the

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health of thousands of British troops in Egypt.

REMEMBER THAT—

(1) In these pages I have written only about Cairo. Of Alexandria I have little personal knowledge;

(2) Unless this deplorable condition of affairs in Egypt is once and for all remedied—*for generations to come thousands upon thousands of British troops will, whilst on garrison duty, be subjected to the same temptations as obtain now. The past is irremediable, the present is our opportunity. Let us say, "This evil must go," and posterity will benefit. For their good, for the honour of our beloved Empire, for the sake of God and good, let us do the right.*

NOTE TO ABOVE

Except these few lines, nearly every word of this small book was penned in Egypt—when I was partially recovering from enteritis and colitis.

Since my arrival in England, I have seen

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for the first time, and have been appalled by, the moral condition of London, and nearly all the large towns in Great Britain. Not one but scores of our Colonial soldiers have remarked to me that the immorality so openly displayed in certain parts of London, whilst not as open and hideous as in Egypt, is simply awful, and it is certain that their old time reverence for the "Homeland" has received a terrible shock.

I have sought with some success to do for our men in London what I did in Cairo, and have been unspeakably surprised at the criminal negligence evinced by the authorities. An Australian soldier said to me :

"It looks to me as if it were the women who paid the police and not the Government. They (the police) either are blind to the open solicitation or are paid not to try to stop it."

Are we at war, or are we playing at war ? One is almost inclined to think the latter, from the fact that in this present time of crisis these women are permitted (is it going too far to say—encouraged ?) to ply their hideous trade, and to render useless thousands

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and thousands of our soldiers by infecting them with a foul disease.

Why should not each woman who is known (and the police should know) to earn her living either in whole or in part by these means be sent to a special munition works, there to help to end the war, instead of doing, as at present, more harm to our forces than the greatest defeat would entail.

We believe in the liberty of the subject, but not a liberty that means license to prey upon our gallant men. We are fighting for freedom, and if we are going to win we must first cope with this terribly insidious vice that is a cancer corrupting the whole nation.

I know there are some who will say, "You can't make men virtuous by Act of Parliament." If that is the case, why prohibit theft, murder, arson, etc. One thing is certain—that our soldiers, British and Colonial, deserve the Government's best help in removing from our midst the fearful temptations of the London streets. It has been done elsewhere: it can be done here.

Banish drink, and with it (or very soon after it) prostitution will all but disappear.

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Drink, as every doctor of note will readily admit—

- (1) Causes lack of self-control.
- (2) Diminishes the power of discerning right from wrong—*i.e.* deadens conscience.
- (3) Quickens those passions of which I have been speaking.

Sir Victor Horsley said to me in Alexandria that “ nine out of ten of the men who are to be found in the venereal barracks are there as the result of drink.” From my own personal experience in Egypt I believe he underestimated rather than overestimated the percentage.

Is England to be the last great country to banish from its midst this drink traffic that seemingly has its tentacles round Government, Church and Society ?

This traffic cannot be mended ; it must be ended. To win this war it should be ended now.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TURNING OF THE TIDE

I HAVE stated that as the immediate result of the new, and for the most part evil, environment in which the Australians and New Zealanders found themselves, many of them cast off temporarily the restraints by which they had been held in check in the more favoured homelands. Those of us who were labouring for their spiritual welfare became, however, increasingly conscious that the tide of pleasure and sin-seeking which was at its full in January of 1915, was commencing to turn. The undue pursuit of pleasure, if that pleasure be a doubtful one, invariably produces a surfeit. The most disappointed of men is that man who has his lower longings satisfied. In all the strength of youth, with all the natural instinct for pleasure, many of these men became conscious that sin, and even pleasure, could not satisfy the truer and

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deeper yearnings of their better selves. They became less disposed to visit Cairo, and more inclined to go to the Y.M.C.A.'s in the various camps.

On the 14th February the ebb began. Men who had up to that time persistently and consistently avoided spiritual conversation with the chaplains and Y.M.C.A. secretaries, began to welcome it. One man expressed to me in somewhat quaint phraseology the sentiments of many when he at about this time said :—

“ I am fed up to the teeth with Cairo and the rotten life I have lived since I joined (the Army). I want something that will satisfy a man—something solid. I have taken particular notice lately of some of the Christian blokes ; they may be wowsers (a term applied to Christians), but they have got something. I’m hanged if I know what it is. They are different somehow ; they seem to be satisfied, and not to act like us blokes. We go rushing round after pleasure like a lot of mad tom-cats chasing their blooming tails, and then me-awing and grouching because they can’t catch them. Look here, Captain, I feel now that what’s

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good enough for them is good enough for me ; how can I get it ? ”

It was an easy matter to lead such a man to the One who alone can “ Satisfy the yearnings of the soul.”

One afternoon I was sitting at what I used jokingly to call my “ receipt of custom ” (which was in other words the chair in the Y.M.C.A. tent behind the table upon which stamps, post-cards, etc., were exposed for sale), when a Lancashire soldier came up and bought a half piastre stamp. He went away, and in a few minutes returned and bought another one, and repeated this operation so often that I at first did not “ drop to it ” that this was perhaps the lad’s peculiar and original method of showing his desire of speaking to me privately. At length, noticing that he only came to the table when no one else was there, and lingered near it unnecessarily, I broke the ice by asking him whether he wanted to speak to me.

“ Yes, sir, I just do.”

“ Well, what’s your trouble ? ”

“ I can’t speak to you here, sir.”

“ All right ; come to my tent.”

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We went to my living tent, which was for convenience in my work pitched next to the big Y.M.C.A. one. As soon as he had sat down he said, with tears in his eyes and voice: "Please, sir, I do want to be a Christian "

"Why?"

"Please, sir, my father and mother are real true Christians, Methodists, and I promised them when I left N—— (Lancashire) that I would keep straight, that I wouldn't swear, or drink, or go wrong. I meant to, but when I got with the boys I couldn't say no; I was afraid of being laughed at; and bit by bit I got worse and worse, and now I am as bad as the worst. I want to get back to live like I used to. I am fair sick of the life I'm leading now; there's nothing in it. I don't know how to get back, for I have got a long way on the down track. Can't you help me, sir?"

(It is impossible for me, a colonial, to attempt to reproduce the strong Lancashire dialect in which the man spoke, but I give the sense of his words as nearly as I recollected them when I wrote down roughly that very evening a record of the conversation.)

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I replied : " No, I can't."

" You can't ; then what am I to do ? "

" You believe in Christ, don't you ? "

" I do, sir."

" Then come right now to Him. He loves you as if you were the only one on earth He has to love. He died for you because He loved you. He rose again from the dead that you might know His sacrifice for you was accepted by God, and that therefore your sins, if you trust Him, are forgiven, and that He might be able to give you the Holy Spirit, in order to give you power to think right, speak right and do right."

" Will Christ do all that for me ? I swear terrible bad, and am fair ashamed of my thoughts at times. How can I let Him do all that for me ? "

" Put Him to the test."

" How ? "

" Wouldn't you believe me if I told you anything ? "

" Of course I would, sir."

" If I promised to do something for you and you knew I was able to do it, shouldn't I have to fulfil my promise ? "

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" Yes, sir."

" Look here (I turned up my Bible at those words of Christ in John x. 27, 28, and 29), does not Christ say, ' I give unto you eternal life.' To whom does Christ promise eternal life ? "

" To those who hear and follow."

" Have you heard His voice ? "

" I don't rightly know, sir."

" Have you never longed to be a Christian ? Have you never been miserable because of your sins ? Have you never wanted to lead a true life ? "

" Many, many times, sir."

" Are you prepared to follow Christ ? It means persecution. Your tent-mates will give you a rough time of it. You will have to let on on whose side you are. Are you willing ? "

" I am that, but I haven't the strength to do it, sir ; I mean to tell the other chaps ; I couldn't do it on my own."

" I know that. Now listen to what Christ says : ' I give to you eternal life.' That life is different from the natural life you have, it is a higher life, a life that has blood, strength in it ; it is His own life ;

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Christ gives Himself to you, so that you may win in the future where you have been beaten in the past, that you may conquer those sins which have conquered you in the past, that you may live by and in His power a clean life. Will you here and now accept Christ as your Saviour, confess Him before your mates, and live for Him ? ”

“ I would, if only I thought I could stick to it.”

“ It is not you so much who will have to stick to Christ. It is Christ who pledges Himself to stick to you.” I read verse 28, “ They ” (that includes you) “ shall never perish, neither shall any ” (that includes you) pluck them out of my hand,” do you believe that ? He promises to save you if you mean business.”

He interrupted me : “ I do mean business.”

“ Well, He promises to save you and to keep you ; won't you put Him to the test ; by asking Him to save and keep you now ? ”

There in that tent the man knelt down and accepted Christ's word at its full value and rose, as his life afterwards proved, a changed man.

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He was the first whom, after six long weeks of an empty ministry, I had the privilege of leading to the Master. Two nights after he came in, his face beaming with holy joy, and insisted on seeing me in my private tent. We were busy, but I handed over my share of the work to my colleague, the Rev. Kenneth M'Iver (whose faithful service of love hundreds of our mounted men will remember) and went with him to the tent.

"I have got two chaps here as are just like I was yesterday; they wants to be Christians just as I did; you tell them just as you telled me. I can't remember exactly what you said, I'm that thick in the head," he told me hurriedly as we walked the few yards between the tents. These men before many minutes had elapsed saw the truth and became true followers of the Lord.

Thus the work commenced, and before a week had passed several more of the Lancashire Territorials had made the great decision. These in their turn told some of their friends among the New Zealanders, of the new and strange joy and power that

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had come into their lives, and the results of their testimony were seen the following Sunday evening. I had been speaking on the "Three great Words in Ephesians, ii. 8 grace, faith, and salvation," and asked all those men who really wanted to live the Christian life and were willing to pay the price, viz., quitting everything that they knew to be sin and openly acknowledging Christ to be their Saviour, to meet me after the service in my private tent adjoining the Y.M.C.A. It was a little time before I was able to get there, as two men intercepted me on the way to ask me to help them in their spiritual difficulties. When at last I reached the tent I, to my glad surprise, had considerable difficulty in getting in. Every available spot was packed with men. Four or five were on my bed and the rest were perforce standing. For nearly two hours I spoke to them individually, and with only one exception they decided that henceforth they would, by God's good grace, live for Him who died for them.

All the men who came into my tent were New Zealanders ; several belonged to my brigade, the New Zealand Mounted Rifles.

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Paul said, when speaking of the success which had attended his ministry. "I laboured yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me." No true Christian worker can say anything else when God has been graciously pleased to crown his labour with an abundant harvest of souls. No man, however brilliant, however gifted an orator, however learned, can ever of himself lead one of his fellow-creatures out of the darkness into the wondrous light, life, and liberty of Christ's bestowal. I have many times been asked to account for the wonderful ingatherings of soldiers into the Master's Kingdom, which I have been privileged to see in Egypt, and later in England and Wales. I have only one answer, "God was answering the prayers of His children in New Zealand, Australia, and Great Britain." I have been so conscious of this that time and again, when so wearied in body and mind by my labours in the hospitals during the day, and in the slums three and sometimes five nights a week, that I have found it impossible to have the quiet waiting on God which is usually essential before preaching, I have felt certain that God would

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answer the prayers of believing parents and friends of these men, and never have I been disappointed.

In tens of thousands of homes in New Zealand and other lands prayer was going up for the welfare and salvation of these men. Is it, therefore, wonderful that God should honour their requests? No, to my mind—God being what He is—it would have been infinitely more wonderful if He had not.

Although my motives in writing of this aspect of my work may be misinterpreted, I am conscious that, so far as I know myself, my one aim is to glorify the infinite love and mercy of the Great Father. In a ministry of many years I have been conscious of what to a large number of Christians may seem a strange fact, viz., that I have never yet seen one case in which the person who has been brought into a new and conscious relation to Christ can trace his or her conversion to one particular person ; many do, or rather think they do, but when inquiry is made I have always found that, unknown perhaps to them, some one or some others have been praying for them. How many are the influences that God brings to

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bear upon the soul—the godly example of parents or friends, the word of the preacher, the silent voice of conscience, a text which has been impressed upon the mind by the Holy Spirit, the lessons taught in the hard school of failure, the yearning for purity and peace, the consciousness of some special sin,—all these lead up to and culminate in that psychological crisis which we term “conversion.” One sows, often not knowing that he has done so ; another reaps. The reaping is impossible unless the ploughing, the harrowing, and the sowing have preceded it. The reaping is the act of a moment, the preparation extends over months. The reaping, men see and glorify (if so be they are not taught of God to realise that “Neither is he that soweth anything, nor he that reapeth, but God that giveth the increase”). The faithful sowing, few remark. One man with the gift of the evangelist (people are inclined to forget it is God’s gift) reaps largely, but his work would go for nothing unless many others had been used to do the preparation. “All glory, praise, and honour be to God.”

The devil generally over-reaches himself ;

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he is wise but not all-wise. Hundreds of soldiers told me that one of the main reasons which led them to become Christians was that under the pressure of the temptations of Cairo they realised as never before how weak they were and how undreamt of until then were the possibilities of evil they discovered in themselves. That, therefore, which at first sight seemed to be a lure to the devil and sin, proved to be a friendly beacon beckoning them to God and goodness.

Let me give you a practical illustration of this :

One night, a fine, well set-up soldier of about thirty-five years of age came to me in the Y.M.C.A. and asked whether he could speak to me privately. We immediately adjourned to my private tent and I said :

“ Tell me what is the matter, then I may be able to help you.”

“ Last Sunday night I went with some of my mates down the Fishmarket (perhaps the worst slum in Cairo). I have been what you would call a fairly decent sort of fellow, drank when I felt inclined but rarely got drunk. I kept myself fairly clean ; you know what I mean. (I nodded.) Well, three

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of my mates went into one of the houses upstairs, and I sat down in the room beneath. I give you my word, Captain, I never till then realised what a devil I really was. I was sure frightened at myself. It (the temptation) came upon me so suddenly that it had nearly downed me before I knew where I was. I didn't know what to do. I felt all my good resolutions slipping away from me and nothing but low, mean, dirty, thoughts taking their place. I was certain I should go under, and then like a flash I said to myself, 'They say God answers prayer—I'll see whether He really does,' so I just says 'God, keep me from making a beast of myself,' and would you believe me, Captain, in a minute I had got something from somewhere (it must have been God—wasn't it?) to think like I ought to. I tell you, Captain, I am afraid of myself now. I can't trust myself as I did. I want to get a power from outside myself into myself so as to always live so that I need not be ashamed of myself."

It was an easy matter to lead such a man in that frame of mind to trust the keeping power of a loving, living, risen Christ.

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Night after night for weeks after, in fact, every night that I was not working in the slums, men used to come and see me, and, as I have said, sought to receive the power to live above the new and evil environment in which they found themselves.

CHAPTER IX

THE GLORIOUS WORK OF THE Y.M.C.A.

It is impossible to praise too highly the great and beneficial effect produced upon the Australian, British, and New Zealand soldiers as the result of the labours of the various secretaries of the Y.M.C.A. tents.

Mr Wm. Jessop, the Organising Secretary of the Cairo Y.M.C.A., rose splendidly to the occasion and seized the opportunity with both hands. Almost without any warning Cairo had become alive with troops, Indians, Ghurkas, Lancashire Territorials, Australians, and New Zealanders followed one another in quick succession. Y.M.C.A. tents were established in every camp. The magnitude of the work demanded more secretaries than were immediately available. The local American Mission supplied temporary secretaries to the Mounted Brigade tent, the Rev. Mr Galloway and the Rev. Mr Atcheson filling the positions most ably,

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and with great acceptance to the troops. The Rev. K. M'Iver took up, at the end of January 1915, the secretarial duties in the tent in which I was more particularly interested. Mr Bell, secretary of the Glasgow Y.M.C.A., in the aerodrome camp among the Australians stationed there; Dr Jays of North Nigeria, in the Lancashire tent; and Mr Oatts, in the other New Zealand Y.M.C.A. tent. The Salvation Army laboured splendidly for the men in the fine hut which, with characteristic promptitude, they had erected. The Anglican Church had also a small tent.

Thus for the New Zealand troops no less than four recreation tents were provided, in addition to which Mr Logan of the Egyptian General Mission practically threw his house open to our boys. Each night of the week there was something of interest—a popular lecture, a concert, a competition—going on in one or other of these institutions. The soldiers increasingly found that their legitimate wants and their wholesome desire for pure recreation were catered for in the camp, and felt less disposed after a hard day's toil to go to Cairo.

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They found by experience that a soldier's life is no sinecure. It was drill, drill, drill, from morning to night. Fatigue duties demanded their daily quota of victims. Guards always had to be kept. Manœuvres taxed their strength to the utmost. Route marches made them desire to go to bed early, and made sleep sweet even though the bed were sand. Some of the Mounted men were even heard to envy the "foot-sloggers" or "beetle crushers," since the latter had no horses to look after.

As the months slipped by, these duties were not slackened but rather increased, and occasionally the "grouser's" voice would be lifted up and the query heard "To what purpose is all this training?" The O.C.'s knew, and the steep slopes of Gallipoli would never have been surmounted had our gallant lads been one whit less sound of wind and limb. The stern route marches, the miles trudged over the shimmering sands of the deserts, the daily toil of guard and fatigue parties weeded out the "unfits," and it can be questioned whether any men were better fitted, physically, for the sternest campaign

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in which, perhaps, the British have ever been engaged, than our fine boys. Picked men in the beginning, they were, on that long-looked-for day in April, when they left their desert home to face the foe, "trained to the last ounce" and fit for anything. What flesh they had on was muscle, their faces were tanned by the hot rays of the Eastern sun, and to use the stock military phrase and to mean it, which is another matter, they were indeed "A fine body of men."

Many a spectator's heart throbbed and his face flushed with pride when our boys of the main body marched through the four centres before leaving New Zealand, but if he could have seen those same men after nearly five months strenuous desert-training and noted the improvement in physique and discipline, he would indeed have been more and more proud of his representatives at the front, and more confident of their manifest ability to uphold the honour and dignity of New Zealand upon the field of battle. The heroes of Anzac have made a name that will never die as long as history remains to tell the epic of their

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gallant landing, of their heroic charges, of their patient endurance in the trenches, and that day when, defeated but not disgraced, they made that marvellous evacuation with all the precision and martial skill of the best troops the world has ever seen.

The old proverb says "Distinctions are invidious," and to contrast our boys with or even hint that they were superior to the gallant Australians and British who shared with them the stress and strain of the shot, shell, and shrapnel, and the still more trying "infinite torment of flies" day and night for month after month, would be vain-glorious and foolish. It is sufficient to say, that they won for New Zealand a renown which every inhabitant of the Dominion delights to remember.

The sadness of those who have lost their near and dear ones, buried thousands of miles from the island home which they loved and for which they died, is mitigated to some degree by the glory of their achievements and the imperishable renown they won.

The story of that campaign will doubtless be written by many who will be able to speak from their own experience and observation

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of the facts ; this I cannot do, but this little book will, I feel, not be written in vain if it vindicates the character of those men whose death was so heroic, and brings comfort to relatives who will learn from its pages how many of our soldiers learned during the last few months of their lives not only to be soldiers of the King, but, what is a higher, a nobler, a more enduring honour, soldiers of the Cross.

I can only write of my own experiences, and I do so with no desire of ignoring the self-sacrificing and successful labours of the other Padres. My work was but a fraction of what was accomplished, and if it were so honoured many more of our men were led in other ways, and by other means to "The central hope of weak and erring humanity—Jesus Christ."

What little I was able to do was entirely or almost entirely due to facilities afforded by that splendid institution the Y.M.C.A.

I cannot write of the assistance so freely and graciously extended to our men without alluding to the labours of Rev. Mr M'Gill (of the American Mission) at Heliopolis in providing for their comforts and needs

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physically, mentally, and spiritually. He honoured me by permitting me to co-operate with him on several occasions in his manifold labours of love.

The Red Cross and the Y.M.C.A., under the able leadership of Mr Jas. Hay, conducted a most successful enterprise in the very heart of Cairo (The Esbekia Gardens) providing refreshments and clean amusements. The work of Mrs de Castro, Mrs Stewart, and many other ladies in the tea-rooms had undoubtedly a most beneficial effect upon those men who went to that part of the city.¹

I cannot speak too highly of the magnificent hospitality extended to our men by all the denominations of Cairo.

The missionaries of the American Mission without exception placed their houses at the virtual disposal of our troops. Their kindness is beyond all praise. Hundreds of men

¹ The Y.M.C.A. has been recently (1917) enabled, by the generosity of members of the Baltic Exchange, London, to purchase one of the finest permanent buildings in Cairo, the Bourse, at a cost of £10,000. This has been transformed into a club and hostel for soldiers, and five hundred men can sleep there any night—a great refuge from the perils of the streets for men passing through the city.

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were, I firmly believe, saved from the sins of Cairo by the gracious hospitality of these fine people.

The Presbyterian, Methodist, and Anglican Church people did all that was humanly possible to provide our boys with "A home away from home."

The Directors of the Egyptian General Mission, Mr Swan and Mr Logan, who lived at Zeitoun, spent and were spent in their endeavours to help our soldiers. Many a convalescent man has found in their homes the sympathy and cheer which more than anything else contributed to his perfect recovery.

The general European population, irrespective of nationality and creed, excelled themselves by the kindness and consideration they extended to the troops. It would be but a gracious act if in consideration of the unbounded self-sacrifice of these good Cairo folk on our behalf some small monument be erected as a lasting memorial of our gratitude.

The Young Men's Christian Association at its Central Office, and by its more than a score of tents, proved itself to be in deed

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and in truth the young men's friend. It rose to each new call for the much-needed extension of its multifarious activities. Mr Jessop, ably helped by his worthy help-mate Mrs Jessop, toiled as few could toil to provide for the mental, social, and spiritual needs of scores of thousands of troops in Egypt.¹

I can only speak of that which I know, and testify to that which I have seen, in the many tents where I was privileged to assist.

Real, solid spiritual work done by spiritual men rarely, if ever, fails to effect permanent spiritual results. The effects of the united endeavours of the Churches and the Y.M.C.A. were increasingly apparent. I am by no means certain that I should separate them for, as I understand, they are one; the Church is the heart which prompts the work and which sustains the hand, the Y.M.C.A., in the uplifting of the young manhood of our land.

For nearly a year I preached from three

¹ It accompanied the men to Gallipoli, and is now at work in the most advanced posts away in the desert. The number of centres in Egypt has increased to 58.

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to five times a week, and often six times on Sundays in hospitals, camp clearing-stations, and Y.M.C.A. tents, and on only one occasion failed to see immediate decisions for the Lord Jesus Christ. The smallest number that I ever saw decide as the result of a Sunday's work was ten, and sometimes I have been privileged to witness over a hundred men proclaim their allegiance to their Saviour, at a single Sunday service, and several hundred during the whole week's meetings.

I, of course, was able only to see the work of grace as exemplified before my own eyes, and that was but a small part of the whole. The Y.M.C.A. secretaries could tell of hundreds upon hundreds of men who in their tents have made the "great decision." To the best of my knowledge thousands of men were reached, benefited, and in many cases won to Christ in a year by the various agencies of the Church of God.

To Him be all the praise !

Such a work, however, could only be accomplished by the aid of the many noble, self-sacrificing Christian soldiers in the ranks. The following incident will serve to show

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how their influence reached many who could not have been won by any other agency.

One night after an address in a Colonial Y.M.C.A. tent, I noticed among those who had expressed their desire to lead a new life a man whose face was not only unusually ugly but also really bad. Vice had left its indelible mark on his countenance. I asked a new convert who was standing near me who he was. He replied:

“Do you mean that bloke standing near the door?”

“Yes.”

“That bloke whose dial is the dizzy limit?”

“Yes.”

“I don’t know him, but he’s a waster from his looks,” was all the information he could give me.

I went over to “the bloke whose dial was the dizzy limit” and found the poor fellow in deep distress. He acknowledged, with an oath at every third word, that he was a G——d——d waster, always on the b—— booze, couldn’t live clean, but wanted strength to live as in his better moments he felt he should live.

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He knelt down and prayed, and in the strongest and worst possible language told God all he knew against himself. It was not a pretty tale, and was garnished with such frightful oaths that when he got off his knees I said :

“ Look here, C——, I believe God was pleased to hear you pray, but He would have been better pleased if you hadn't sworn so much.”

He looked at me in surprise and said :

“ I can't b—— well make out what you are driving at. I'm d—— if I swore. I only spoke to God just as I always speak ; what did I say wrong ? ”

I recapitulated all the various oaths that I could remember he had used, and told him that the Christ, who alone could save him, had said “ swear not at all,” and suggested that we should get down on our knees again and ask God to cure him of that habit. He consented and prayed something like this :

“ God, You know what a b—— fool I am ; I can't open my mouth without cussing ; just wash my mouth out and make it clean, for Christ's sake, and do it quick, so the

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blokes in my tent won't think me a d—— hypocrite."

The following Thursday night I was just back from my work in the Esbekia when C——'s head was put through my tent door, and in suppressed tones of excitement he said :

"I have got a bloke here as wants to do the square thing with God; just talk to him as you did to me last Sunday night, and I think it will do the trick; he's a decent sort of bloke, he is."

I asked him to bring his friend in, and then leave so that I could speak to him privately.

In a minute the "bloke" appeared. I asked him what he wanted to see me about. To my surprise he was an educated man, an undergraduate of a well-known New Zealand University. He said, "I have never given any real thought to religion. As a child I 'jibbed' on the miracles. I couldn't understand them and thought there was nothing in religion. But I have been thinking more about religion the last few weeks than ever I thought before, and C—— has made me think more. I don't suppose you know (I smiled; I did know), but he

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was the foulest-mouthed brute in the whole regiment, and I have to share the same tent with him. He never told a yarn but it was full of filth from beginning to end. Well, since Sunday last I have seen a miracle. *He hasn't sworn once*, and it's not the fault of the boys that he hasn't; they've ragged him enough; and instead of being the most selfish man I have ever known, he is always trying to do something for the very chaps who rag him. Now I know I am not as bad as he was, but I am worse than I want to be; and God knows that if, as C—— says, Christ cured him of his sins, I am willing to be a Christian to be quit of mine."

Scores of men, in a quiet, unostentatious way, by their lives so recommended the Gospel of Jesus Christ that their comrades were induced by their example to follow the same Lord.

Swearing is undoubtedly the besetting sin of troops. Some commence it because they think it manly and soldierlike, others because they have contracted the habit and cannot give it up, others because they are so ignorant that they do not know how to emphasise

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their remarks in any language other than swear words. Here again I found that many men became Christians in order to overcome this senseless habit.

One night a soldier came into my tent and said :

“ Captain, my people are good Christian people, but I commenced swearing as a lad simply out of bravado, and now I can’t trust myself not to swear even when I am in the company of women. I have tried my damndest to give it up, but it’s no good. I am swearing before I am able to stop myself. Can I get cured of that, and of foul thinking ? ”

I, of course, had but to point him to the “ One who is mighty to save.”

One night several of the new converts were gathered for prayer in my tent, and the conversation turned upon what was the greatest difference Christ had made in their lives. This boy said : “ The greatest difference I notice in myself is this. In our route marches we all, as you know (the others nodded sympathisingly), get choke full of dust and sand ; it gets in our eyes, our ears, our mouths ; and before I became a

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Christian I was always cursing it, the man riding in front of me, the army, myself for having been such a fool as to join, and everything. To-day, as you chaps know, the wind was awful, the sand was as bad as it could be, but I was just as happy as if there was nothing wrong ; my heart was singing and my lips had to sing too."

I could weary the reader with countless stories, similar to the above, but I forbear. However, I must tell of one man who came to see me in my private tent. Tears were in his eyes, and all he could do was to sit on my bed and repeat over and over again, " I can't get away from it."

" What can't you get away from ? "

Again he repeated, " I can't get away from it." At last, he told me that his whole family were earnest Christians ; he had wanted to lead his own life, and at an early age had run away from home so as to escape what he called " the endless talk about Christ and salvation." After being away for years, during which he had lived an absolutely wicked and Godless life, war broke out, and he had been induced to go home to say " Good-bye " to his people before leaving

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New Zealand. They told him that morning and evening they would pray for him. He got mad and told them not to waste their breath, and then, to use his own words, "I knew they were praying for me, and each day for weeks past I have been afraid their prayers would be answered. Against my own will I have felt compelled to think of my past, and to long to be a Christian. Whilst you were speaking to-night I felt that to-night I must yield; *I cannot get away from their prayers.*"

There you have in seven words the secret of the salvation of so many of the soldiers. They could not get away from the prayers of God's people in distant lands; against their own will they were drawn by the Spirit of Love to their parents' God. No power can avail against prayer. It is the mightiest of all known factors, and always prevails.

One evening at the conclusion of a meeting I had been holding in the Rev. Mr M'Gill's Y.M.C.A. building, a tall, broad-shouldered, dissipated Australian non-commissioned officer came up to me and said, "Do you think God could do anything with a waster like myself."

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"I know He can, if you will but give Him a chance."

Irrelevantly he next said :

"Were you not holding evangelistic services in S—— (Australia) in 1899."

"I was."

"Weren't you at —— (mentioning a certain mission) ?

"Yes."

"Do you remember the leader of the mission ? "

I looked at him more carefully and, to my surprise, recognised in this "waster" the man who had, at the time he spoke of, been in charge of the mission, and said :

"Yes, and you're the man."

"I am. Where can we go to have a quiet talk."

I took him to the place where the pots, pans, and coal were stored, the only spot available, as the other two rooms were filled with inquirers. He sat down and told me his story. He had been a great religionist—a tremendous sectarian—an omniverous reader and indefatigable worker, but, nevertheless, a poor Christian. On joining the A.I.F. he hadn't had the pluck to show

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his colours, and had inevitably commenced to go on the down-grade. As is usually the case with men of that type of religious character, his drift to absolute infidelity and, in his case, flagrant immorality, when once he lost his sectarian moorings, had been extremely rapid. He was also a blasphemer and a persistent drunkard. I read to him Hosea xiv., and explained it, and then suggested that we should pray together. He agreed. We knelt down. I prayed, and he followed. I have rarely heard such a prayer : at first it seemed as if the heavens were as brass, but on he prayed : still it seemed as if the prayer only reached the ceiling : then the prayer stopped—no answer. The silence seemed interminable, and was only broken by more prayer—the prayer of a man who had hope, for now he was pleading God's promises of forgiveness and healing : again, there was a silence that could be felt, broken by the man standing up with tears streaming down his face and a look of indescribable awe upon his countenance, as in hushed, solemn, yet glad words he said :

“ Oh, God, You've forgiven me, God. You've forgiven me, ME, ME, ME (his voice

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grew lower and lower until the last 'me' was but a whisper, and then again he said 'ME'), You've forgiven ME," and now the prayer sounded like a song of wondering love: "God, I promise You I'll do anything for You. Anything. Oh, God, You're wonderful—just wonderful, oh, how wonderful to forgive me."

His after-life and changed face bore eloquent testimony to the reality of his conversion.

CHAPTER X

IN THE MILITARY HOSPITALS

ONE of a chaplain's chief duties, is, of course, to visit the sick and wounded in the hospitals. In order to ensure the systematic visitation that alone can be productive of good, a roster was drawn up, and until the troops left for Gallipoli two of the chaplains were detailed to visit the New Zealand Hospital each day. After the main body of Australian and New Zealand troops had proceeded to Anzac (which, by the way, is not, as some assume, a Turkish or Arabic name, but the initial letters of Australian, New Zealand Army Corps) the chaplains, who did not accompany them were attached for duty at Malta, Alexandria, Port Said, Cairo, and for a time at Helwan. I was sent to the last place to act as New Zealand resident chaplain at the great El Hayat Hotel, which had been converted into an Australian and New Zealand convalescent

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hospital. Helwan is perhaps the oldest Spa in the world, and for thousands of years has been the resort of rheumatic and gouty patients, who have sought to obtain relief by bathing in its naturally hot and medicinal springs.

I had many interesting talks with the men, the majority of whom had been wounded during the early days of the fighting at Gallipoli.

Visiting the wounded on the great stone piazza of the hospital, I remarked a young man who was apparently not more than twenty-two years of age. He wore dark spectacles, and the whole of his right cheek was seamed and scarred by livid lines which marked the track of two machine gun bullets. Pale as death and attenuated in form he was, to judge from appearances, the most unlikely of men to win the coveted D.C.M. which he had earned, so his comrades vowed, half a dozen times over by deeds of splendid heroism.

I said to him, "I'm sorry to see you have been so badly knocked about, my boy."

"Thank you, Captain, but I'm no worse off than thousands of my mates, and much better off than thousands of those poor

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beggars who were worse hit than I was. I'm glad to have been able to do my bit."

"It must make a chap think pretty seriously over there," I said.

"My word, it does. When I went there I had never given a thought to religion, but I hadn't been long on the Peninsula before I found myself compelled to think mighty hard. I had always lived a fairly decent life, and with the exception of swearing had very little to reproach myself with, but *there* I just felt I needed strength, and so I just gave myself to Christ, and God did enable me to conquer swearing. He took the desire for it away, and only once since the day I decided to be a Christian have I sworn. It happened something like this. We were in action, and at a critical moment the machine-gun jammed; I lost my self-control, and swore at one of my mates, and do you know, Captain, I am sometimes inclined to think that the reason I got this wound in my jaw was a punishment for my sin. I was real sorry though, the very moment after I swore. Do you think that it was a punishment?"

I was deeply touched and replied, "He

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has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.' No, my boy, I scarcely think so."

"Well, sir, I'm glad you don't think so; personally I don't regret it very much. It was worth going over to the Peninsula and being wounded, to become a Christian; I am a better and happier fellow now than I was before. It's grand to have your conscience at rest; it's worth anything."

Before I left him he said very quietly, "I am glad, too, to be able to take back with me the D.C.M.; my people will be so pleased."

There are many who, as they read the casualty lists, are stricken to the heart to see recorded therein as "Killed in action" some loved relative or friend who, as far as was known, had never definitely accepted Christ as his Saviour, and consequently Christian friends have been disposed to doubt whether God had heard and answered their prayers. To such God's message comes, "Be not faithless, but believing." God, being what He is, must for His own honour's sake hear and answer every believing prayer. I will now give in the very words of the narrators

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several instances of men, who, had they been killed, would naturally have been supposed to have died impenitent. However, before doing so I will repeat the statement of a man who made no profession of Christianity. In one of the English papers a clergyman of high standing was reported to have said that those men who gave their lives for the country would receive mercy and salvation from God, since "Greater love hath no man than that he giveth his life for his friends." In the tent this subject was being discussed, and the strong common-sense of the majority of the disputants was voiced and evidenced by one of them finally saying, as reported to me by a soldier who was present: "I don't hold myself up to be a plaster-saint (everybody smiled; he certainly did not look like one), and if those blooming parsons think any sane chap would swallow that lie they are bigger fools than I took them for, and that's saying a lot. Here's J—— here (mentioning one of his mates); we all know what sort of a bloke he is, and why he had to get out of New Zealand; he had made W—— (his place of residence) too d—— hot to hold him. Here am I, I swear

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like blazes ; there is not a blamed thing that the Bible is up against that I don't do ; and to say that we, if we get a bullet through our heads or hearts, go straight to Heaven is more than I can swallow. I am fed up with the wowsers (slang for minsters or Christians) who say one thing, and say it to try to please us, when the Book they say they try to follow says just the opposite. The Book says—I don't set up to know much about it, but I remember this much—'He that believeth not shall be damned.' There's no blessed shilly-shallying there, it's straight to the point. Do J—— and me believe? of course we don't, or we couldn't live like we are living. If wowsers like that bloke lived among men and knew what they were really, they wouldn't talk such blooming rot."

An Australian who took part in the now historic landing at Gallipoli, told me the following :

"As we climbed up the hill it seemed as if I was going to certain death. My mate on the left had his head blown clean off his shoulders ; two others on my left fell, one dead, the other severely wounded. I knew, and had known for years, that I should be a

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Christian ; my parents are real Christians—Presbyterians. I felt I must pray, and ask God to save me ; I did so. I asked God to take me, and I promised there and then that I would serve Him. Then something whispered to me through all the noise, ‘ It’s a cowardly thing to ask God to save you when you are only afraid of being killed,’ and for a moment I thought it was. Then came this thought into my mind, ‘ It’s never too late to do right,’ and so I prayed again and, my word, it fairly surprised me how God answered it so quickly ; and I knew He had answered it, for I felt at perfect rest, and I didn’t care much whether I was killed or not, for I knew I was at last right with God.”

Another soldier from South Australia said, in almost the same words :

“ The fire was terrible ; how any of us got through it alive was a miracle. I was with a bunch of men climbing the cliff, and I never expected to get to the top alive. My people are Christians, and I knew they were praying for me, and that sort of comforted me for a bit, but I knew enough to know that if I was to be saved I should have to pray for

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myself. We sheltered in a hollow for a few minutes, and the bullets were whizzing just over our heads, there I gave myself right up to Christ, told Him what a rotter I had been, and promised Him that if He would save me I would do anything I could for Him, and He did."

Had these two men been killed, who would have thought that they had in the heat of the conflict made the great decision? Yet they had done so, and their after-life showed that the decision had been real.

Another man, a Christian, told me his experience in the following words:

"As the boats drew nearer and nearer the shore I was *afraid that I should be afraid*, and by my cowardice bring disgrace upon the name of Christ, for all my mates knew me to be a professing Christian. In manœuvres I knew that I was apt to get excited and very nervous, and so I asked God to give me courage and peace so that I might not dishonour my Saviour, or seem to be flurried. Immediately it seemed as if the words of the hymn were spoken to me, and I used them as an addition to my prayer:

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“Hold Thou my hand,
I am so weak and feeble,
I dare not take a step
Without Thine aid,”

and then a strange indescribable peace possessed me, my fears vanished, and I was much cooler and more collected than in any sham fight. All through that long and terrible charge I felt as if God's hand indeed held me. We flung ourselves down and dug ourselves in under heavy fire. We had advanced too far, and when night fell the Turks almost surrounded us, firing continuously and from three sides of our hastily dug trench. Man after man fell. We had determined to die rather than surrender, so it seemed as if death was certain. Still I had perfect peace. Then the O.C. asked me to crawl out under fire to take look-out duty. I got there safely, and never in all my Christian life had such a glorious experience of God's Presence, feeling absolutely assured that all was right whether I lived or died. At last a stray bullet hit me in the head, but still I retained the sense of the Father's Presence, and felt absolutely assured that all was right, whether

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I lived or died. I was wounded at night and was not discovered until the next morning. Through it all I had peace."

A wounded Highlander, a private, who before he enlisted, had been a school-master, told me of two men in his regiment who were great chums. One was a decided Christian, the other was not. The Highlanders were preparing to charge, and a feeling of deadly nausea crept over the non-Christian. He looked at his Christian friend, and saw that he, at any rate, possessed a peace and power to which he personally was a stranger. In his fear and desire to be brave there was wrung from him a cry to God for salvation. The answer came, and he said he seemed to hear a voice saying, "Fear not, for I am with thee." His fear vanished, and he was by divine grace able to "play the man."

The longer I worked in the hospitals, the more my admiration for the men increased. Their magnificent patience, wonderful endurance, and uplifting cheerfulness were beyond praise. It was very rarely that a man was heard "grousing," and if he did his mates gave him such a time of it that he found it convenient to assume a more cheerful frame

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of mind, although he might be far from possessing it. The following are but two instances culled from many which go to prove their unquenchable courage.

One stifling summer afternoon I was visiting the New Zealand General Hospital. Lying on a cot in the verandah was a young New Zealand soldier intently watching the efforts of a small ant to carry away the corpse of a large fly, and bursting into merry peals of laughter at the failures of the ant. As I drew near the bed I saw that the poor fellow had lost his leg below the knee. A shrapnel shell had burst near him, killing his two mates and felling him to the earth. He did not lose consciousness, and called to his friend by name, asking him where he was hit. Receiving no answer he concluded that he was either dead or insensible, and trying to rise to go to his comrade's assistance he discovered to his great surprise that a foot in its boot was on the ground a few feet from him. Looking at himself for the first time he knew that he had lost part of his leg, which had been blown clean off, and that this limb he saw was, or had been, his own.

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This dear lad's eyes filled with tears as he spoke of the death of his mates, but he was inclined to think little of his own great loss when he considered how many had "got off worse than he had."

But I think the most astounding example of patient endurance and cheerfulness was that evidenced by a British soldier to whom a friend of mine spoke on board a transport which was conveying wounded from Gallipoli to Alexandria. He was a big-boned, stalwart north-countryman. My friend noticed him lying alone and asked him how he was. He, in answer, said that he had lost his sight from shell concussion, and that the doctors held out no hope for its restoration. His right leg had been blown off near the hip, and his left arm had also gone. When my friend offered his condolences the poor man simply said in the broadest of broad accents, "Well, I thank God I have a little home to go back to, a good wife, and six children. I may be a bit knocked about, but my life is spared, whilst many of my mates have gone under. I have a lot to be thankful for. Things might have been worse."

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What a lesson to those of us who are disposed to "grouse" if the bacon and eggs are a bit cold ; if the weather is not what we wish for ; if we have toothache, neuralgia, or any kindred but trivial complaint !

CHAPTER XI

DISTRIBUTING COMFORTS TO SICK TROOPS

It was in the middle of August 1915 that I was called upon to assist Chaplain-Captain A. Macdonald in the distribution of gift goods to the New Zealand sick and wounded.

Great battles had been fought at Gallipoli. Hundreds upon hundreds of wounded were pouring into the Cairo hospitals in an almost continual stream. There were not sufficient chaplains left in Cairo to cope with the work of visiting, distributing the needed comforts, and taking services at the various hospitals and camps.

This work was made a pleasure by the liberality and assistance received from all those who had the oversight. Nothing was grudged the men. We had instructions to procure anything that would conduce to their comfort and welfare. Many of the poor wounded men had lost everything, and had come over from the Peninsula

DISTRIBUTING COMFORTS

wrapped in a blanket—no great privation considering the heat of the sun. I remember an amusing incident that happened in an Australian hospital where I was visiting a New Zealander who had been badly wounded, and whose blood-stained clothes had been cut off him at Gallipoli. He was convalescent, and that afternoon was being transferred to the New Zealand General Hospital. I was in the ward when the Sergeant in charge informed him that he was to go away from the hospital in exactly what he came into it with (of course the Sergeant thought he had come with a full kit). Without a smile the New Zealander calmly removed every single stitch of clothing, sat on his bed fully dressed (in an identification disc!), and calmly announced that he was quite ready to leave. The Sergeant glanced at him and said :

“Don’t play the fool; orders are to go in what you came in.”

“That’s just what I am doing,” replied the patient.

For men in that condition, it was the chaplain’s duty to furnish shirt, braces, socks, anything, in fact, in the clothing

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line save his uniform. In addition to this each man received a razor (some were blunt, very blunt), a strop, shaving-brush, soap, a weekly issue of tobacco, New Zealand papers, etc. etc., besides which the Sister in each ward received dainties to tempt the appetites of the invalids. I may be biassed, but I do not see how more could have been done for the men by any Government.

There were, of course, many complaints because the sick and wounded did not receive any pay. Whilst sympathising with the poor fellows, I could not but approve the reason why pay was stopped. Convalescents would in some cases, if given their pay, as soon as they were able to leave the hospital get intoxicated, and coming back in that condition would upset the rest of the patients. Were it not for the "rotters" the army would be splendid, but, since they unfortunately exist, the decent men have to suffer for the misdeeds of the few "wasters."

Later on arrangements were made whereby the patients were permitted to expend a few shillings a week at the hospital dry canteens.

DISTRIBUTING COMFORTS

Chaplain-Captain Macdonald had all the machinery incidental to the distribution of many and various comforts to over 1500 men in (at first) some fourteen hospitals in such good running order that when I assumed charge of this department, consequent on his departure to New Zealand through ill-health, I had only to keep things going. Unfortunately, however, I shortly afterwards fell ill, and was compelled to leave Egypt and recruit in England.

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